

CITY MANAGER
CITY OF PALM COAST

Stage 2 Media Results For
PAUL TROMBINO



This report reflects media results through 3/31/25.

FINALIST CANDIDATE MEDIA SEARCH RESULTS

The media search results have been prepared for the exclusive use for the City of Palm Coast, FL.

SGR does not and indeed cannot represent either (1) that all of the information is true, correct, and/or accurate (though SGR makes every effort to obtain all relevant information to provide, including – when appropriate – an explanation or additional detail from a candidate) or (2) that the information is legally appropriate for consideration in the decision whether to hire. For example, information about a person that shows they are in a protected class (race, color, religion, sex and national origin, age, or disability, in addition to others) should not be considered in hiring but may be provided by SGR since it is publicly available and may be discovered and brought to City of Palm Coast's attention by members of the public. City of Palm Coast should consult with its own legal counsel and/or human resource professionals for advice in this regard.

You will find in the Table of Contents pertinent information relating to the candidate beginning with the Findings if any. The Findings will provide any negative, questionable, or controversial articles regarding the candidate. It is highly recommended to view these findings in their entirety.

The remainder of the media search provides links to social media resources, google search information, and newspaper articles where the candidate is mentioned. Click and open each article to view the information provided. The type of link is identified in the Table of Contents.

In addition, SGR uses Lexis Diligence, a proprietary platform to perform critical due diligence research for your organization. This can also be found in the table of contents.

It is strongly recommended that each link is opened and read in its entirety.



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Paul Trombino Findings:

CaseText

<https://casetext.com/case/jacobsen-v-iowa-dept-of-transp>

May 21, 2021

Paul Trombino, do-it-all member of Gov. Kim Reynolds' administration, will resign June 3

<https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/politics/2021/05/20/paul-Trombino-resigns-gov-kim-reynolds-administration-iowa-department-homeland-security-emergency/5190334001/>

Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Director **Paul Trombino** will resign June 3, Gov. Kim Reynolds announced Thursday.

According to a news release, **Trombino** is stepping down to pursue other opportunities.

"From devastating floods in 2019 to the 2020 global pandemic, Paul has worked around the clock to coordinate Iowa's emergency response," Reynolds said in a statement. "I appreciate his willingness to challenge the status quo to improve efficiency and functionality in state government. I am excited for him as he pursues his next opportunity."

An interim director will be named at a later date, according to the release.

Trombino previously headed the Iowa Department of Transportation under Reynolds' predecessor, Gov. Terry Branstad. President Donald Trump nominated him to head the Federal Highway Administration in 2017, but **Trombino** withdrew his name from consideration, citing family reasons.

Trombino joined Reynolds staff in January 2019 as her chief operating officer. He also served as interim director of the Iowa Department of Administrative Services.

"Since devastating floods struck in 2019 and the global pandemic the year after, Paul has worked around the clock to coordinate Iowa's response," Reynolds said in a January 2021 statement announcing his appointment to head the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. "I appreciate his outside-the-box thinking and willingness to challenge the status quo to improve efficiency and functionality in state government. He will do an exceptional job leading this critical state agency."

May 20, 2021

State's emergency management leader to resign in 2 weeks, Reynolds' office says
Homeland Security and Emergency Management Director Paul Trombino will leave his role on June 3.

<https://www.weareiowa.com/article/news/local/local-politics/iowa-director-homeland-security-emergency-management-paul-Trombino-resigning-june-2021/524-a09cd2e0-6362-4f4b-96a9-4765a04e543b>

Iowa's director of Homeland Security and Emergency Management will leave his position on June 3, four months after he was appointed by Gov. Kim Reynolds.

Director Paul Trombino was appointed on Jan. 22, according to the department's website. He also currently serves as Iowa's Homeland Security Advisor.

According to Reynolds' office, Trombino is leaving the position "to pursue other opportunities."

"From devastating floods in 2019 to the 2020 global pandemic, Paul has worked around the clock to coordinate Iowa's emergency response," Reynolds said in a press release. "I appreciate his willingness to challenge the status quo to improve efficiency and functionality in state government. I am excited for him as he pursues his next opportunity."

Reynolds' office said an interim director will be named at a later date.

Trombino previously served as Chief Operating Officer for the state of Iowa from 2019-2021 and interim director of the Iowa Department of Administrative Services from 2020-2021.

From 2017-2019, Trombino served as president of a professional services company focusing on civil engineering, planning and economic development. That job allowed him to serve clients and work on projects across 40 states.

Before that, Trombino served Iowa as director of the Iowa Department of Transportation from 2011-2016. From 2015-2016, he was the president of the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials.

In 2016, he was vice-chair for the Executive Committee of the Transportation Research Board - National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine.

July 16, 2021

State agency director who quit after 19 weeks kept retention bonus

<https://iowacapitaldispatch.com/2021/07/16/state-agency-director-who-quit-after-19-weeks-kept-retention-bonus/>

Former Iowa Department of Homeland Security Director **Paul Trombino** kept almost \$17,000 in retention-bonus pay after remaining on the job just 19 weeks.

Gov. Kim Reynolds appointed **Trombino** director of the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management in January and awarded him a \$40,000 retention bonus for what her office called his “continued dedication and willingness to serve the people of Iowa.”

The bonus, first reported in April by the Cedar Rapids Gazette, was increased in February to \$46,176, raising **Trombino's** annual pay to \$158,246, well above the legally mandated salary cap of \$112,070. His hiring took effect Jan. 22.

In her Feb. 9 letter notifying **Trombino** of the increased bonus, Reynolds's chief of staff, Sara Craig Gongol, wrote that in accordance with Iowa's administrative rules, he was “required to sign an agreement to continue employment for a specified period of time following receipt of payment. A 12-month period of time has been deemed commensurate with the amount of payment you will receive.”

She wrote that if **Trombino** was fired or quit “before completing the time requirement, you will be required to repay the proportionate amount of the payment for the time remaining.”

However, Craig Gongol also pointed out in her letter that the bonus would be paid out in 26 bi-weekly installments, which meant that if **Trombino** quit before the year was up, he would not be in a position to have to repay any of it.

Over the first four months of his employment, **Trombino** collected nine full payments of \$1,776, and one partial installment of \$888, for a total of \$16,872, according to the Iowa Department of Administrative Services. His resignation was announced in May by Reynolds, who thanked **Trombino** for working “around the clock” in coordinating Iowa's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Trombino's last day on the job was June 3, roughly 19 weeks after he was hired.

DAS spokeswoman Tami Wiencek said that “only in the case of a lump sum payment would bonus money be paid back,” adding that “this is not such a case.”

Trombino worked as the director of the Iowa Department of Transportation from 2011 to 2016. In January 2019, he returned to state government as Reynolds' chief operating officer. From March 2020 to January 2021, he also served as DAS' interim director.

Reynolds' office did not respond to questions about the bonus, saying those would be better answered by DAS.

Greeley City Council pressures Public Works to speed up MERGE project along US 34 Bypass

Greeley Tribune (Colorado)

February 26, 2025 Wednesday

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Section: BUSINESS

Length: 835 words

Byline: Tyler Duncan

Body

Councilman Johnny Olson and the rest of the city council went to bat for Greeley residents as they said Public Works downplayed the cost and extended the construction time for a long-awaited project to build interchanges at two busy intersections.

On Tuesday, Greeley Public Works provided an update on the Mobility Expansion for Regional Growth (MERGE) project, which has been a top priority for the city since 2015. The city's plans for funding the project includes a \$65 million voter-approved loan from the Build America Bureau under the Transportation Infrastructure and Finance Innovation Act and an additional \$51.7 million in grants the city has secured.

"It's a record amount of funding," City Manager Raymond Lee said. "Nobody else in Colorado has seen this kind of funding before."

The MERGE project aims to address Greeley's top two dangerous intersections at 35th Avenue and 47th Avenue along the U.S. 34 Bypass and construct new, safer interchanges. The project also includes a new mobility hub that would help pedestrians better traverse that area of Greeley safely.

After voters approved a measure in November that allowed the city to take on the \$65 million in debt, the project became fully funded according to Public Works, and they are ready to proceed with the project's next steps. The estimated cost provided to the council was \$131.2 million, and the project is estimated to be completed by the end of 2029.

Olson took control of the council meeting from there, criticizing the handling of this project and placing blame on Public Works for how long the project would take. Olson said this project could've been completed within the next year if Public Works Director Paul Trombino had not told the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to stop working on the project in 2021.

"We could've finished this in 2026, but now we're two years behind because you guys wanted to do it yourselves," Olson said.

Trombino admitted to halting CDOT's work in 2021 because the city didn't have a financial strategy to fund the project then. Olson, a former deputy executive director of CDOT, said many steps of the project could have been completed without a financial strategy, allowing the city to be further along on this project than it currently is.

Greeley City Council pressures Public Works to speed up MERGE project along US 34 Bypass

Olson further criticized Public Works for their behavior toward CDOT, saying they've hurt the city's relationship with CDOT, potentially putting them in a bad position. Due to this strained relationship, the city will likely be opting to move all of MERGE's design and project planning in-house, increasing the city's risk and omitting the protections that working with CDOT would provide, he continued.

"Our relationship with CDOT has been downright disrespectful and uncalled for," Olson said. "I don't believe that the city of Greeley has the ability to deliver on this project."

City staff reassured the council it was still possible to work with CDOT, but they recommended moving the project in-house to save the city an additional \$400,000. Olson, however, argued that the \$400,000 is worth it to ensure the city remains federally compliant and criticized the estimated cost as being far too low from reality anyhow.

"I think the council and the constituents need to know that it's not going to be \$131 million," Olson said. "It's probably going to be closer to \$155 million to \$170 million."

The other city council members didn't need much more convincing to support Olson's perspective. Councilman Tommy Butler agreed that Public Works needs to speed up the process.

"When we brought this to the voters, I think they imagined this would be done before 2029," Butler said. "You've presented us with these options on how to proceed, but it seems like we're just going to charge forward with what you have decided on your own."

Mayor John Gates closed the discussion by expressing his disappointment at the impression that the city would not work more closely with CDOT on the project and his remorse about their strained relationship with the city.

"I had personally hoped CDOT would run this project. I am concerned about our relationship with CDOT," Gates said. "Clearly what we know now that we didn't know six months ago is the projects' going to happen. We all wish it were quicker."

In an interview after Tuesday's meeting, **Trombino** said Public Works received council's message and will work to accelerate the projects timeline as requested.

"I think that council clearly wants to see the project put on the quickest schedule that we can," **Trombino** said. "We heard that, and we're going to pursue that."

Editor's note: This story has been updated to correct the quote of Mayor John Gates and clarify the reporting on his comments, as well as to correct reporting on a loan voters approved, as no funds have yet been withdrawn. An earlier version inaccurately stated the Colorado of Transportation would not be involved with the project, but the agency will have to approve construction give the project's connection to U.S. 34.

Load-Date: February 28, 2025

End of Document

Iowa Department of Transportation director resigns at Gov. Kim Reynolds' request

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, IA)

28 February 2023

Web Edition

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Section: NEWS

Length: 571 words

Byline: Grace King

Body

The director of Iowa's Department of Transportation, which is engaged in major interstate projects affecting thousands of drivers across the state, was ousted Friday by Gov. Kim Reynolds who 'decided to seek a change in leadership,' her office said.

At Reynolds' request, Mark Lowe resigned from the \$156,000-a-year job effective Jan. 10. A transition plan to appoint a new director has not been announced, said Iowa DOT spokeswoman Andrea Henry.

In his resignation letter, Lowe said it was a 'terrific privilege' to have served as director.

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'Gov. Reynolds has my sincere appreciation for the opportunity to do so,' Lowe said in his letter. 'I have great faith in, and regard for, the people of the Iowa Department of Transportation and have every confidence they will continue to serve the state of Iowa well as they continue under new leadership.'

In an email Friday, governor's spokesman Pat Garrett said Reynolds 'appreciates Director Mark Lowe's years of service, and has decided to seek a change in leadership as she continues to build her administration.'

The governor's office did not say why Reynold's removed him.

Lowe, who had been the department's general counsel, was appointed interim director of the department by then-Gov. Terry Branstad in November 2016 following the resignation of **Paul Trombino III**.

Reynolds appointed Lowe as the permanent director in May 2017 after she replaced the departing Branstad as governor.

Tom Rielly, chair of the Iowa Transportation Commission, which develops transportation policy and plans for the Iowa DOT, said he was disappointed and surprised by Lowe's dismissal.

'I wish Director Lowe the very best,' said Rielly, of Oskaloosa. 'I do respect the governor and look forward to working with the governor's office for the transition.'

Rielly said the Iowa DOT has a 'good team' and a 'solid commission' that will carry it through the transition.

Henry said the department has 'strong executive leadership' that will carry it through until an interim or permanent director is announced.

The Iowa DOT is in year one of a \$3.4 billion five-year transportation improvement plan.

The latest project in the Corridor proposes widening Interstate 380 an additional lane in each direction and replacing a bridge between Forevergreen Road and Highway 30, a project estimated at \$203 million.

Work on that project would not begin until construction is complete in about 2023 on a massive redesign of the interstate 80/380 interchange.

In addition to beginning work on that major project, the Iowa DOT has been overseeing reconstruction of Interstate 29 in western Iowa, which was inundated by floodwaters after a major storm last spring.

And in another major project, the department is replacing the Interstate 74 bridge that links Bettendorf and Moline, Ill. The project began in 2017 and has been plagued by delays and fighting between the contractor and department.

Lowe's ouster is one of three recent dismissals under Reynolds.

In June, she requested the resignation of Jerry Foxhoven, director of the Department of Human Services, saying she wanted to take the department in a 'new direction.' He later filed a \$2 million wrongful termination suit, which is pending.

Reynolds also fired Iowa Finance Authority Director Dave Jamison in 2018 following complaints of sexual assault and harassment from women in the agency.

Comments: (319) 368-8664; grace.king@thegazette.com

Graphic

Iowa Department of Transportation director resigns at Gov. Kim Reynolds' request

Load-Date: March 1, 2023

End of Document

Iowa DOT Director Trombino announces resignation

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, IA)

7 February 2023

Web Edition

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Section: NEWS

Length: 645 words

Byline: Mitchell Schmidt

Body

After less than six years at the helm of the Iowa Department of Transportation, its director announced he'll step down.

Paul Trombino III's departure comes as the department, which employs more than 2,600 people, addresses growth in statewide freight traffic - the number of large trucks on Iowa's primary roads has grown by 123 percent over the past three decades - and infrastructure updates, including the overhaul of the Interstate 80 and Interstate 380 interchange, among other major projects.

Trombino's letter of resignation, effective Nov. 28, was submitted to the Governor's office on Wednesday.

Advertisement

Trombino, 50, said he's ready for a new chapter.

"Everybody knows this job is temporary, and it's meant to be that way," Trombino said Thursday. "It was a great professional experience in my life and I've cherished every single day. We've done some amazing things and the department is in great shape moving forward, and I thought it was a good time for me to take the next step."

He added that he "didn't feel good looking for a job while I'm in this job. ...

So I felt the best way would be for me to resign and then take a few weeks or so to really get a better sense of what opportunities are out there."

Trombino - who makes about \$147,000 annually as DOT director - said he doesn't know his next step, but he said, "I want to continue to have an impact on transportation and have an impact on improving communities and ultimately improving economic opportunities and development."

Branstad appointed Trombino as DOT director in May 2011, and he was confirmed by the Iowa Senate in June of that year.

Ben Hammes, Gov. Terry Branstad's spokesman, said the Governor's Office likely will pursue a nationwide search for Trombino's replacement.

'We'll try to find the best person for the job," he said. 'We were very thankful for (Trombino's) leadership in the DOT, he really modernized and brought innovation to the department.

'We were told that he was pursuing other opportunities, and we fully respect that."

For some state officials and legislators - and for DOT staff, according to Andrea Henry, communications director - Trombino's announcement was unexpected.

'I'm very surprised," said John Putney, vice chairman of the Iowa Transportation Commission. 'I wish him the best, but it would have been nice to hear it from him than from second parties, as a commissioner."

State Sen. Tod Bowman, D-Maquoketa, chairman of the Transportation Committee, also was surprised by Trombino's decision. He added that, 'He was incredibly knowledgeable and he worked in a bipartisan way, so I was very proud to be right there in the weeds with him on some of the issues he worked on."

Iowa's infrastructure 'was crumbling and we're certainly not where we want to be, but we're moving in the right direction, and I think director Trombino put his efforts in that process," Bowman said.

State Rep. Josh Byrnes, R-Osage, chairman of the Iowa House Transportation committee, described Trombino's resignation as a 'huge loss."

'Director Trombino has put Iowa on the global map with his approach to logistics and transportation. (He) has incorporated technology and used an economic vision to make the Iowa DOT a model for other state DOTs," Byrnes said.

Trombino cited building leadership development within the department, enhancing efficiencies and opening the door to Iowa's first venture into automated vehicle technologies as some of his accomplishments on the job.

Before coming to Iowa, Trombino worked with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for 17 years, according to the Iowa DOT website. He was elected last year as president of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials board of directors.

Gazette-Lee Des Moines Bureau reporter Erin Murphy contributed to this report.

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Graphic

Iowa DOT Director Trombino announces resignation

Load-Date: February 8, 2023

End of Document

Trombino third Iowan to see bid for federal post halted

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, IA)

4 January 2022

Web Edition

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Section: NEWS

Length: 583 words

Byline: Mitchell Schmidt

Body

With his decision to withdraw from consideration as nominee to be administrator to the Federal Highway Administration, former Iowa Department of Transportation Director Paul Trombino III has become the third Iowan in recent weeks to see his hopes of reaching a key federal position stalled or dashed.

Citing family reasons, Trombino, who served as director of the Iowa DOT for about five years, withdrew his name as nominee to the FHA, which is an agency within the U.S. Department of Transportation.

A department representative on Monday confirmed Trombino's withdrawal.

He was nominated to the post in September by President Donald Trump.

During the early stages of his nomination process, Trombino drew praise from Republican Gov. Kim Reynolds and U.S. Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, for his work with the Iowa DOT and potential as head of the Federal Highway Administration.

'Gov. Reynolds has great respect for Paul Trombino and is thankful for all he did as director of the Iowa Department of Transportation,' Reynolds' spokeswoman Brenna Smith said in a Tuesday email. 'Family comes first, and the governor understands Paul wants to spend time with his father.'

'While Paul Trombino would have been a strong leader at the Federal Highway Administration, I respect his decision to do what he determined was best for him and his family,' said Ernst, a member of the Environment and Public Works Committee, which oversees the FHA.

Trombino did not return calls seeking comment.

Trombino's nomination had cleared the committee in October.

About one month ago, U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, confirmed that he would hold up the nomination of Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey to serve as the U.S. Department of Agriculture Undersecretary for Farm Production and Conservation. Cruz said he would do so until he had a discussion with the president on the Renewable Fuel Standard.

A U.S. Senate committee approved Northey's nomination, but it has yet to reach the Senate floor.

U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, said last month in a conference call with Iowa reporters that Northey's nomination was a priority.

According to Grassley, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said there were two lists of priorities, one for judges and one for sub-cabinet people. Northey would be moved to the top of the list for sub-cabinet people, Grassley said.

'Since there is nothing about Northey himself that is a problem, I would think it would be easy to get 60 votes," Grassley said.

While Northey finds his nomination on hold, Trump campaign aide Sam Clovis, who had served as Donald Trump's national campaign co-chairman, last month withdrew his nomination to become the USDA's chief scientist.

His announcement was made after he was linked to special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian involvement in the 2016 presidential race.

Clovis, a Northwest Iowan, former Morningside College professor and Sioux City radio talk show host, wrote in his announcement that he wished to remain in his current position as a White House adviser to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Mueller's investigation found that Clovis was aware that another campaign aide attempted to meet with Kremlin officials claiming to have 'dirt" on Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton.

Terry Branstad, then governor of Iowa, was a recent exception. He was sworn in as U.S. ambassador to China this past May.

Gazette reporter James Lynch contributed to this article.

I Comments: (319) 339-3175; mitchell.schmidt@thegazette.com

Graphic

Trombino third Iowan to see bid for federal post halted

Load-Date: January 5, 2022

End of Document

After 105 days, Reynolds' office discloses messages from fired agency head

Newstex Blogs

Iowa Capital Dispatch

August 24, 2021 Tuesday 8:15 PM EST

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Length: 874 words

Byline: Clark Kauffman

Body

Aug 24, 2021(Iowa Capital Dispatch: <https://iowacapitaldispatch.com> Delivered by Newstex)

After a delay of 105 days, Gov. Kim Reynolds has released some of the correspondence her office received from the head of the Iowa Veterans Home before he was fired earlier this year.

Reynolds fired IVH Commandant Timon Oujiri without explanation in early May after it was alleged that he had collected \$105,413 in improper, excess compensation since 2019. The excess pay and benefits were paid out as a result of Oujiri's timesheets incorrectly showing 112 hours, rather than 80 hours, worked in each two-week pay period, according to a report from the state auditor's office.

After Oujiri's firing was announced, the Iowa Capital Dispatch filed a formal Open Records Law request with Reynolds' office, seeking access to all written communications between Reynolds' staff and Oujiri about any overpayments. Reynolds' staff did not acknowledge the request.

On July 28, the Capital Dispatch sent another written copy of the request to Reynolds' office and asked, 'No response to this May 10 record request?' Again, Reynolds staff did not acknowledge or respond to the request.

On Aug. 2, after an Iowa Auditor of State report disclosed the reasons for Oujiri's dismissal[1], the Capital Dispatch wrote again to Reynolds' staff, this time requesting copies of a 'personal thank you note' Oujiri had sent to governor and an email he had sent to Reynolds' chief of staff. The request noted the governor's staff had never acknowledged the larger, May 10 request for all overpayment-related correspondence with Oujiri.

On Monday, the governor's legal counsel, Michael Boal, wrote to the Capital Dispatch, and provided three documents:

An August 2019 handwritten note Oujiri sent to Reynolds[2] shortly after the unauthorized pay increase took effect, in which he told the governor, 'I am truly grateful for the increase in my base salary.' An email Oujiri sent to Reynolds' chief of staff about the same time, in which Oujiri said, 'I truly appreciate the confidence in my increase.' An email Oujiri sent to the chief of staff hours before he was fired in May, saying, 'I am very sorry for not questioning my increase. I am terribly sorry to embarrass you and the governor. I am hoping and praying you can find forgiveness in your heart.'

Boal said the office was not withholding any documents relevant to either request for records about Oujiri's overpayment.

However, he did not turn over to the Capital Dispatch two other documents related to Oujiri's pay:

A handwritten note Oujiri allegedly sent to Reynolds that's dated Dec. 21, 2020, four months before he was fired, saying, 'I am deeply humbled and honored when Sara called to inform me of my salary increase.' A second handwritten note sent allegedly sent the same day to Reynolds' chief of staff, which read, 'Thank you for the phone call last Friday informing me of my salary increase.'

The latter note suggests the pay hike referenced in both 2020 messages is unrelated to the unauthorized pay increase, which was still in effect but had been initiated in 2019.

Asked why it took Reynolds' office 105 days to turn over the three records it provided, Boal did not respond.

Reynolds's office has yet to comply with two other Capital Dispatch requests for documents:

Auction records: On April 8, the news organization asked Reynolds' spokesman for any legal opinions the office obtained about the legality of the governor auctioning off a meal with herself at the governor's mansion to benefit a private, Christian school in Des Moines. Reynolds' staff never responded to that request and never responded to an April 14 follow-up inquiry. After a May 5 follow-up, the governor's spokesman said the request had been routed to Boal. On May 17, the Capital Dispatch asked about the status of its request. The governor's office has not responded.

Bonus pay: On July 22, the Capital Dispatch asked Reynolds' staff for a copy of the written agreement the state had with former Iowa Department of Homeland Security Director Paul Trombino regarding his retention bonus. Trombino had kept almost \$17,000 in retention-bonus payments after remaining on the job just 19 weeks. Before he quit, Reynolds' chief of staff had informed Trombino in writing that he was 'required to sign an agreement to continue employment for a specified period of time following receipt of payment.' But the governor's office has not responded to the Capital Dispatch's request[3] for a copy of that agreement and has not responded when asked whether such an agreement existed.

Although Reynolds' office is subject to the Iowa Open Records Law, enforcement is problematic. The Office of Ombudsman and the Iowa Public Information Board field citizen complaints about information access, but neither of them has any jurisdiction over the governor's office.

[1]: <https://iowacapitaldispatch.com/2021/07/29/auditor-iowa-veterans-home-leader-knew-he-collected-105k-in-excess-pay/> [2]: <https://iowacapitaldispatch.com/2021/08/05/fired-vets-home-head-thanked-reynolds-staff-for-pay-raise-in-2019/> [3]: <https://iowacapitaldispatch.com/2021/07/29/state-officials-silent-on-agency-head-departures-and-purged-text-messages/>

Load-Date: August 25, 2021

End of Document

State officials silent on agency-head departures and purged text messages

Newstex Blogs

Iowa Capital Dispatch

July 29, 2021 Thursday 7:15 PM EST

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Length: 734 words

Byline: Clark Kauffman

Body

Jul 29, 2021(Iowa Capital Dispatch: <https://iowacapitaldispatch.com> Delivered by Newstex)

State officials are not answering questions about this year's unexpected departure of the director of homeland security and they refused for weeks to address the departure of the head of the Iowa Veterans Home.

On May 7, Gov. Kim Reynolds' office announced Iowa Veterans Home Commandant Timon Oujiri had been 'relieved of his duties,' but provided no additional information on the change or why it was made. An audit report released Thursday[1] indicates Oujiri was fired after failing to report that since 2019 he had collected more than \$105,000 in excess compensation due to a payroll calculation error.

On May 10, the Iowa Capital Dispatch sent a formal Open Records Law request to Reynolds' spokesman, asking for all written communications between Oujiri and the governor's staff related to any 'overpayments.' The governor's office never acknowledged the request.

In 2017, Iowa's Open Records Law was expanded to require that all public agencies disclose the 'documented reasons and rationale' for either firing or demoting an employee, or for allowing an employee to resign in lieu of termination.

Because the governor's announcement had said only that Oujiri had been relieved of his duties, without saying he had been fired, the Capital Dispatch attempted to confirm whether Oujiri was still an employee of the state and thus not subject to the law requiring disclosure on the reasons for termination.

On June 13, the news organization sent an email to the Iowa Department of Administrative Services, which functions as the state's human resources department, asking for Oujiri's 'last day of employment at the Iowa Veterans Home' and asking when he was removed from the state payroll.

To date, neither DAS or the governor's office have responded to that question or to any follow-up inquiries on the matter.

Questions unanswered about former agency head's retention bonus

DAS and the governor's office also aren't responding to questions about former Iowa Department of Homeland Security Director **Paul Trombino**, who kept almost \$17,000 in retention-bonus payments after remaining on the job just 19 weeks.

Reynolds appointed **Trombino** director of homeland security in January, then awarded him a \$46,176 retention bonus, raising his annual pay to \$158,246, well above the legally mandated salary cap of \$112,070.

In a Feb. 9 letter notifying **Trombino** of his bonus, Reynolds's chief of staff, Sara Craig Gongol, wrote that in accordance with Iowa's administrative rules, **Trombino** was 'required to sign an agreement to continue employment

for a specified period of time following receipt of payment. A 12-month period of time has been deemed commensurate with the amount of payment you will receive.'

Earlier this month, the Capital Dispatch asked DAS for a copy of that signed agreement with Trombino. In response, the agency said it had no such document. The agency didn't respond to further inquiries about why it doesn't have a copy of the agreement or whether one was ever executed. The governor's office also didn't respond to questions about the agreement.

Agency has not answered questions related to text message request

Iowa Workforce Development has taken a similar approach to fielding questions about text messages sent and received by IWD Director Beth Townsend.

On May 19, the Capital Dispatch asked for access to Townsend's work-related text messages since March 1. To ensure the records weren't purged once the request was received, the news organization asked IWD to 'take immediate steps to preserve all of the requested records' and to confirm that it had done so within two days.

The agency didn't provide that confirmation and didn't respond to five subsequent inquiries as to whether any effort had been made to preserve the records.

In June, an IWD lawyer told the Capital Dispatch that it attempted to locate the text messages not by looking at Townsend's phone, but by requesting them from her phone-service carrier, Verizon, which told IWD that its copies of any relevant text messages would have already been purged.

Townsend and the IWD attorney never responded when asked why the text messages weren't simply pulled from Townsend's phone.

[1]: <https://iowacapitaldispatch.com/2021/07/29/auditor-iowa-veterans-home-leader-knew-he-collected-105k-in-excess-pay/>

Load-Date: July 30, 2021

End of Document

State agency director who quit after 19 weeks kept retention bonus

Newstex Blogs

Iowa Capital Dispatch

July 16, 2021 Friday 6:11 PM EST

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Length: 438 words

Byline: Clark Kauffman

Body

Jul 16, 2021(Iowa Capital Dispatch: <https://iowacapitaldispatch.com> Delivered by Newstex)

Former Iowa Department of Homeland Security Director Paul Trombino kept almost \$17,000 in retention-bonus pay after remaining on the job just 19 weeks.

Gov. Kim Reynolds appointed Trombinodirector of the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management in January and awarded him a \$40,000 retention bonus for what her office called his 'continued dedication and willingness to serve the people of Iowa.'

The bonus, first reported in April by the Cedar Rapids Gazette[1], was increased in February to \$46,176, raising Trombino's annual pay to \$158,246, well above the legally mandated salary cap of \$112,070. His hiring took effect Jan. 22.

In her Feb. 9 letter notifying Trombino of the increased bonus, Reynolds's chief of staff, Sara Craig Gongol, wrote that in accordance with Iowa's administrative rules, he was 'required to sign an agreement to continue employment for a specified period of time following receipt of payment. A 12-month period of time has been deemed commensurate with the amount of payment you will receive.'

She wrote that if Trombino was fired or quit 'before completing the time requirement, you will be required to repay the proportionate amount of the payment for the time remaining.'

However, Craig Gongol also pointed out in her letter that the bonus would be paid out in 26 bi-weekly installments, which meant that if Trombino quit before the year was up, he would not be in a position to have to repay any of it.

Over the first four months of his employment, Trombino collected nine full payments of \$1,776, and one partial installment of \$888, for a total of \$16,872, according to the Iowa Department of Administrative Services. His resignation was announced in May by Reynolds, who thanked Trombino for working 'around the clock' in coordinating Iowa's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Trombino's last day on the job was June 3, roughly 19 weeks after he was hired.

DAS spokeswoman Tami Wiencek said that 'only in the case of a lump sum payment would bonus money be paid back,' adding that 'this is not such a case.'

Trombino worked as the director of the Iowa Department of Transportation from 2011 to 2016. In January 2019, he returned to state government as Reynolds' chief operating officer. From March 2020 to January 2021, he also served as DAS' interim director.

Reynolds' office did not respond to questions about the bonus, saying those would be better answered by DAS.

[1]: <https://www.thegazette.com/article/gov-reynolds-gives-96000-in-bonuses-to-2-agency-leaders/>

Iowa: Officials criticize for going on company video

CE Noticias Financieras English

January 7, 2021 Thursday

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Length: 333 words

Body

IOWA CITY, Iowa, USA (AP) — Iowa Republican Governor Kim Reynolds and four collaborators helped make a promotional video for a Utah company that received contracts without tender to work on the coronavirus pandemic, a move that has led to accusations of favoritism and misuse of public resources.

The Domo Inc. video features interviews with Reynolds, state epidemiologist Caitlin Pedati and chief operating officer **Paul Trombino** describing his management to respond to COVID-19 as a success for Iowa and the software provider. The presence of officials contradicts a long-standing guide to avoid any indication of preferential treatment in relations with contractors. The video takes a positive turn to its response to the virus, which has caused more cases and deaths per capita in Iowa than in most other states.

The director of the State Hygiene Laboratory, Michael Pentella, reported through a University of Iowa spokesman that the governor's office asked him to participate in the video and that he was not told how the material would be used. Pentella's appearance in the video—where he says Domo is a "great planning tool" could contradict a university policy that limits product promotion.

Domo, which helped launch the COVID-19 testing program promoted by the governor, presents the video and other marketing materials that cite Reynolds in a case study for prospective customers.

A lawyer with experience in the state government estimated that the video, which includes shots inside the Capitol and other state compounds, is "disgraceful for several reasons," if not illegal.

Reynolds spokeswoman Pat Garrett insisted that Domo "wanted a testimony of Test Iowa's success" and the governor and others agreed to participate. She added that Reynolds was proud of the public-private partnership's delivery of test supplies, data analysis, and contact tracking.

Unlike federal law, Iowa statutes do not prohibit government employees from using their positions and titles to promote for-profit businesses.

Load-Date: January 8, 2021

End of Document

UPDATE: Governor ousts Iowa DOT director

Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier (IA)

14 December 2019

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Section: GOVT AND POLITICS

Length: 562 words

Byline: GRACE KING The Gazette

Body

DES MOINES --- The director of Iowa's Department of Transportation, which is engaged in major interstate projects affecting thousands of drivers across the state, was ousted Friday by Gov. Kim Reynolds who "decided to seek a change in leadership," her office said.

At Reynolds' request, Mark Lowe resigned from the \$156,000-a-year job effective Jan. 10. A transition plan to appoint a new director has not been announced, said Iowa DOT spokeswoman Andrea Henry.

In his resignation letter, Lowe said it was a "terrific privilege" to have served as director.

"Gov. Reynolds has my sincere appreciation for the opportunity to do so," Lowe said in his letter. "I have great faith in, and regard for, the people of the Iowa Department of Transportation and have every confidence they will continue to serve the state of Iowa well as they continue under new leadership."

In an email Friday, governor's spokesman Pat Garrett said Reynolds "appreciates Director Mark Lowe's years of service, and has decided to seek a change in leadership as she continues to build her administration."

The governor's office did not say why Reynold's removed him.

Lowe, who had been the department's general counsel, was appointed interim director of the department by then-Gov. Terry Branstad in November 2016 following the resignation of Paul Trombino III.

Reynolds appointed Lowe as the permanent director in May 2017 after she replaced the departing Branstad as governor.

Tom Reilly, chair of the Iowa Transportation Commission, which develops transportation policy and plans for the Iowa DOT, said he was disappointed and surprised by Lowe's dismissal.

"I wish Director Lowe the very best," said Reilly, of Oskaloosa. "I do respect the governor and look forward to working with the governor's office for the transition."

Reilly said the Iowa DOT has a "good team" and a "solid commission" that will carry it through the transition.

Henry said the department has "strong executive leadership" that will carry it through until an interim or permanent director is announced.

The Iowa DOT is in year one of a \$3.4 billion five-year transportation improvement plan.

The latest project in the Corridor proposes widening Interstate 380 an additional lane in each direction and replacing a bridge between Forevergreen Road and Highway 30, a project estimated at \$203 million.

Work on that project would not begin until construction is complete in about 2023 on a massive redesign of the interstate 80/380 interchange.

In addition to begging work on that major project, the Iowa DOT has been overseeing reconstruction of Interstate 29 in western Iowa, which was inundated by floodwaters after a major storm last spring.

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Lowe's ouster is one of three recent dismissals under Reynolds.

In June, she requested the resignation of Jerry Foxhoven, director of the Department of Human Services, saying she wanted to take the department in a "new direction." He later filed a \$2 million wrongful termination suit, which is pending.

Reynolds also fired Iowa Finance Authority Director Dave Jamison in 2018 following complains of sexual assault and harassment from women in the agency.

Load-Date: December 15, 2019

End of Document

Iowa transportation director resigns at governor's request

The Dispatch-Argus (Moline, IL)

December 13, 2019 Friday

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Section: LOCAL

Length: 560 words

Byline: GRACE KING The Gazette

Body

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Load-Date: December 15, 2019

End of Document

Governor ousts Iowa DOT director

Sioux City Journal (Iowa)

December 13, 2019 Friday

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Section: STATE AND REGIONAL

Length: 560 words

Byline: Grace King Cedar Rapids Gazette

Body

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Load-Date: December 15, 2019

End of Document

Iowa Department of Transportation director resigns at Gov. Kim Reynolds' request; Mark Lowe will leave post Jan. 10

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, IA)

13 December 2019

Web Edition

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Section: LIVING

Length: 569 words

Byline: Grace King

Body

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Comments: (319) 368-8664; grace.king@thegazette.com

Graphic

Mark Lowe, director of the Iowa Department of Transportation, will resign from his position after Gov. Kim Reynolds requested a change in leadership. (Jim Slosiarek/The Gazette)

Load-Date: December 14, 2019

End of Document

Former Iowa DOT leader Trombino withdraws from federal highway post consideration; Nominated by Trump earlier this year, Trombino cites family reasons

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, IA)

12 December 2017

Web Edition

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Section: NEWS

Length: 209 words

Byline: Mitchell Schmidt, THE GAZETTE

Body

Former Iowa Department of Transportation Director Paul Trombino III has withdrawn his name as a nominee to become administrator of the Federal Highway Administration.

A U.S. Department of Transportation representative confirmed Monday that Trombino, who earlier this year cleared the U.S. Senate Committee on Environmental and Public Works as a nominee to head the federal highway agency, cited family reasons for withdrawing before a floor vote on his confirmation.

He could not be reached for comment Monday night.

Trombino was nominated to lead the highway administration earlier this year by President Donald Trump. During the nomination process, Trombino drew praise from Republican Gov. Kim Reynolds and U.S. Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, a member of the committee, for his work with the Iowa DOT and potential as head of the Federal Highway Administration, an agency within the U.S. Department of Transportation. The administration supports state and local governments with design, construction and maintenance of the federal highway system.

Trombino left his Iowa DOT post last fall after about five years in the position. Most recently, he was president of McClure Engineering Co., of Clive, which provides engineering services to clients in the Midwest.

Load-Date: December 13, 2017

End of Document

TRUMP'S CHOICE FOR US HIGHWAY CHIEF WITHDRAWS FROM PROCESS

Wisconsin State Journal (Madison, Wisconsin)

December 12, 2017 Tuesday

ALL EDITION

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Section: LOCAL; Pg. A2

Length: 317 words

Byline: RYAN J. FOLEY Associated Press

Body

IOWA CITY, Iowa - President Trump's nominee to lead the Federal Highway Administration has withdrawn from consideration for the post, a surprising development given his widespread support and qualifications, the U.S. Department of Transportation confirmed Monday.

A DOT spokesperson said Paul Trombino III was stepping away from the federal appointment for family reasons. Trombino told colleagues in an email Friday that he had decided to stay in Iowa to take care of his ailing father, whose condition has recently deteriorated.

Trump announced Trombino's nomination in September, and he received bipartisan support. The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee endorsed Trombino in October, with members calling the 51-year-old a talented administrator who would help rebuild the nation's highways. He had been awaiting a vote from the full chamber to lead the agency within DOT, which has a \$44 billion annual highway aid budget and 3,000 employees.

Trombino was a favorite of road builders who successfully helped push for Iowa's 10-cent-per-gallon gas tax increase in 2015.

The Wisconsin native had spent most of his career at the Wisconsin DOT as an engineer and administrator. Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad picked him to run the Iowa DOT in 2011, and he was considered a visionary leader fluent in everything from self-driving cars to shipping policy. Trombino served as president of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials for 2015-2016, a prestigious position in the field.

Trombino surprised Iowa officials when he announced plans to step down the day after the November 2016 presidential election, saying he wanted to look for jobs in the private sector. He soon became president of McClure Engineering Co., an Iowa-based firm.

He told employees in an email Friday that he intends to stay there, saying he looked forward to continuing to work with a "wonderful team."

Load-Date: December 13, 2017

Iowa News Headlines Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Cherokee Tribune (Canton, Georgia)

December 12, 2017 Tuesday

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Section: EXTRA

Length: 388 words

Byline: Staff Writer

Body

(Des Moines, IA) -- Slower than expected state revenue growth means Iowa budget makers may have to find places to cut another 45-to-90-million dollars in spending. The Revenue Estimating Conference released its outlook Monday, projecting about seven-point-two-billion dollars in state revenue for next fiscal year. The Iowa Legislature reconvenes next month. Though manufacturing is making a comeback, online shopping is causing losses in sales tax collections. Some Democrats blame tax credits given to large corporations for the state's money problems. Senator Matt McCoy says some economic development programs are actually draining money from the budget.

(Des Moines, IA) -- A Polk County jury has convicted a 60-year-old man of first-degree murder in a beating death last March. A witness had told the court about seeing James Russell Walden Junior washing blood from his hands. Walden tried to run away when other witnesses showed up, but he was taken into custody by Des Moines just outside the apartment complex. Prosecutors said he hit 45-year-old Sheila Ray Keenan with a blunt object, causing severe injuries to her head and upper body.

(North Liberty, IA) -- Two students who were found unconscious at Liberty High School last month say a third teenager sold them the pill they had taken. The incident happened November 30th. Paramedics were called to the school when a 15-year-old student was found unconscious. While the crew was still at the scene, a second unconscious 15-year-old student was found. Both were revived. The teen accused of selling them the pills has been arrested and charged with distributing a controlled substance. Because of the ages of those involved, no names have been released.

(Clive, IA) -- An Iowan picked by President Trump to head the Federal Highway Administration has decided to step away from the appointment. Paul Trombino the Third says he has decided to stay in Iowa to take care of his sick father, whose condition has been getting worse. Trombino's name was announced by the White House last September and he had received wide-spread, bipartisan support. The 51-year-old has been called a talented administrator who would help rebuild U-S highways. Trombino ran the Iowa Department of Transportation for nearly six years, then became president of Iowa-based McClure Engineering.

Load-Date: December 12, 2017

Trump's pick for US highway chief withdraws from process

Associated Press International

December 11, 2017 Monday 11:46 PM GMT

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Section: DOMESTIC NEWS

Length: 367 words

Byline: By RYAN J. FOLEY, Associated Press

Dateline: IOWA CITY, Iowa

Body

IOWA CITY, Iowa (AP) - President Trump's nominee to lead the Federal Highway Administration has withdrawn from consideration for the post, a surprising development given his widespread support and qualifications, the U.S. Department of Transportation confirmed Monday.

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Trombino was a favorite of road builders who successfully helped push for Iowa's 10-cent-per-gallon gas tax increase in 2015. The Wisconsin native had spent most of his career at the Wisconsin DOT as an engineer and administrator. Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad picked him to run the Iowa DOT in 2011 and he was considered a visionary leader fluent in everything from self-driving cars to shipping policy. Trombino served as president of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials for 2015-2016, a prestigious position in the field.

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Load-Date: December 12, 2017

Trump's pick for US highway chief withdraws from process; Trump's pick for US highway chief withdraws from process

Canadian Press

December 11, 2017 Monday 06:47 PM EST

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THE CANADIAN PRESS 

Section: INTERNATIONAL

Length: 366 words

Byline: Ryan J. Foley, The Associated Press

Body

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Iowa DOT director unexpectedly resigns

Des Moines Register (Iowa)

November 11, 2016 Friday

1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A6

Length: 694 words

Byline: By, William Petroski

Body

Paul Trombino, director of the Iowa Department of Transportation the past five years, has unexpectedly resigned his \$147,000-a-year post and plans to start a job search, probably in the private sector.

Trombino, 50, who helped to secure legislative approval of a state gasoline tax increase in 2015, said Thursday he's been talking with his family about making a job switch for months. He insisted there is nothing troubling behind his decision, saying now is simply a good time to leave.

The state transportation agency, which has about 2,700 employees is in good shape, Trombino said. He also finishes a term this month as president of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, a group that promotes an integrated national transportation system. He said he didn't feel comfortable job hunting while he was still DOT director and he'll likely look for work outside of government, perhaps as a transportation consultant.

"I think my family is looking forward to it, and so I am going to take a few weeks and see what opportunities are out there," the DOT chief said. His resignation is effective Nov. 28 and he added that he has already been contacted by some prospective employers.

Gov. Terry Branstad told The Des Moines Register on Thursday that he did not ask Trombino to resign and the DOT director's announcement came as a surprise. Trombino met Wednesday with Branstad and Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds to inform them of his plans to leave.

"I just know that he has been a great department head and he has done a lot of innovative things," Branstad said. "He runs a very efficient operation and we have the most road and bridge projects that we have ever done," the governor added, referring to a record \$806 million state road construction program this year.

The governor has not yet appointed an interim DOT director, said Branstad spokesman Ben Hammes.

Trombino was appointed as DOT director by Branstad in April 2011 after spending 17 years at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. He is responsible for a \$1 billion annual budget, 9,400 miles of Iowa highways and 4,300 bridges. In addition, the DOT operates state programs for transit, rail, and aviation, as well as motor vehicle services and motor carrier services, and it enforces trucking laws.

Branstad has often praised Trombino, particularly citing the DOT's efforts in 2011 to quickly rebuild three miles of badly damaged pavement on Interstate Highway 680 in the Council Bluffs area in the wake of widespread flooding

on the Missouri River. The work, originally expected to take at least a year to complete, was finished by private contractors in cooperation with the DOT in a stunning 34 days.

Trombino was part of an effort last year that resulted in the Legislature approving 10-cent per gallon increase in the state's gasoline tax that will generate an additional \$215 million annually for state and local road projects. It was Iowa's first fuel tax increase since 1989. The DOT has also done work analyzing supply chains for commodities in Iowa in an effort to enable better movement for businesses and to lower costs. In addition, Trombino has overseen increasingly sophisticated work to remove snow and ice on Iowa's roads during the winter months, and to better communicate information about winter road conditions with motorists.

Two state legislators who chair transportation committees in the Iowa House and Senate said Thursday they had no hint of Trombino's plans to resign and they were caught off-guard by his impending departure.

"I really have a lot of respect for Director Trombino," said Sen. Tod Bowman, D-Maquoketa. "He is certainly very knowledgeable, very flexible and he made himself available. He was a great person and he didn't get political. He just wanted what was best for Iowa's Department of Transportation."

Rep. Josh Byrnes, R-Osage, said there are some good administrators within the DOT who would be suitable as interim directors, and they should be considered along with candidates who apply in a nationwide search to replace Trombino. Byrnes, who did not seek re-election this year, said he probably will not apply for the DOT director's post.

Load-Date: November 11, 2016

End of Document

RESIGNATION OF IOWA DOT DIRECTOR PAUL TROMBINO

States News Service

November 10, 2016 Thursday

Copyright 2016 States News Service

Length: 119 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: AMES, Iowa

Body

The following information was released by the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT):

The Iowa Department of Transportation received notice that Director Paul Trombino submitted his resignation effective Nov. 28, 2016. Trombino is leaving the department to pursue opportunities outside of state government. Director Paul Trombino has been an innovative leader for the Iowa DOT, propelling the department to reimagine the boundaries of transportation. His leadership has had positive impacts not only for the state of Iowa, but the nation. While the Director does not currently have defined employment plans, we look forward to watching how his passion for innovation will shape transportation well into the future. #

Load-Date: November 11, 2016

End of Document

Director of Iowa's transportation department resigns

Associated Press State & Local

November 10, 2016 Thursday 2:57 PM GMT

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Section: STATE AND REGIONAL

Length: 146 words

Dateline: DES MOINES, Iowa

Body

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) - Officials say the head of Iowa's transportation department has resigned so he can consider taking a private sector job.

Iowa Department of Transportation spokeswoman Andrea Henry confirmed Thursday that agency director Paul Trombino has resigned effective Nov. 28.

Trombino didn't immediately return phone and email messages from The Associated Press.

Mikel Derby, a Transportation Department legislative liaison, says Trombino has been considering work in the private sector. Derby says private companies have shown "tremendous interest" in Trombino.

Derby says Trombino "didn't feel it would be respectful to the governor to stay in the role while deciding which way he's going to go."

It's unclear who will run the department after Trombino leaves. He was appointed director in May 2011 after working 17 years for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

Load-Date: November 11, 2016

End of Document

Rilea v. State

Supreme Court of Iowa

March 23, 2021, Submitted; May 14, 2021, Filed

No. 20-0710

Reporter

959 N.W.2d 392 *; 2021 Iowa Sup. LEXIS 62 **; 2021 WL 1932678

RICKIE RILEA, Appellant, vs. STATE OF IOWA, IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, DAVID LORENZEN, in his Official Capacity of Director of the Iowa Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Enforcement Division, MARK LOWE, in his Official Capacity as the Director of the Iowa Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Division, and PAUL TROMBINO III, in his Official Capacity as Director of the Iowa Department of Transportation, Appellees.

Prior History: [**1] Appeal from the Iowa District Court for Polk County, David Nelmark, Judge. The plaintiff appeals the district court's grant of summary judgment dismissing his unjust enrichment claims.

Rilea v. Iowa DOT, 919 N.W.2d 380, 2018 Iowa Sup. LEXIS 96, 2018 WL 5090853 (Iowa, Oct. 19, 2018)

Disposition: AFFIRMED.

Core Terms

fine, unjust enrichment, collateral attack, district court, circumstances, unjust, speeding, ticket, lease

Case Summary

Overview

HOLDINGS: [1]-The district court correctly dismissed appellant's cause of action for unjust enrichment against the State because it was an unlawful collateral attack on his criminal conviction. The unjust enrichment claim launched no attack on, and thus left intact, the criminal conviction that created the fine that he currently wanted returned to him; yet the undisturbed conviction required the court to leave undisturbed too the State's lawful receipt of the fine that accompanied it.

Outcome

Judgment affirmed.

LexisNexis® Headnotes

Civil Procedure > ... > Summary Judgment > Summary Judgment Review > Standards of Review

HN1[[↓](#)] Summary Judgment Review, Standards of Review

Rulings on motions for summary judgment are reviewed to correct legal error.

Business & Corporate Compliance > ... > Contracts Law > Types of Contracts > Quasi Contracts

Contracts Law > Remedies > Equitable Relief > Quantum Meruit

Contracts Law > Remedies > Restitution

HN2[[↓](#)] Types of Contracts, Quasi Contracts

Unjust enrichment is a doctrine of restitution. It requires a plaintiff to prove the defendant received a benefit at the expense of the plaintiff under circumstances that make it unjust for the defendant to retain the benefit. The circumstances giving rise to an unjust enrichment cause of action might more appropriately be labeled unjustified

enrichment seeing as our focus centers on whether there has been a transfer of a benefit without adequate legal ground.


Contracts Law > Remedies > Equitable Relief > Quantum Meruit

Evidence > Burdens of Proof > Allocation

HN3[] Equitable Relief, Quantum Meruit

A person is not permitted to profit by his own wrong. Because a plaintiff must show that the circumstances make it unjust for the defendant to retain the benefit, the circumstances in which the claim arises often determine whether the law will treat the particular enrichment as unjust for purposes of imposing liability.

Governments > Courts > Clerks of Court

HN4[] Courts, Clerks of Court

Court debt is owed and payable to the clerk of the district court. Iowa Code § 602.8107(2).

Contracts Law > Remedies > Restitution

HN5[] Remedies, Restitution

A ground for invalidating the lease must be established before a basis for restitution exists.

Criminal Law & Procedure > Jurisdiction & Venue > Jurisdiction


Criminal Law & Procedure > Postconviction Proceedings

HN6[] Jurisdiction & Venue, Jurisdiction

A conviction by a court of competent jurisdiction ordinarily isn't subject to collateral attack except through a postconviction relief challenge under the procedures in Iowa Code ch. 822.

Civil Procedure > Judgments > Relief From

Judgments

HN7[] Judgments, Relief From Judgments

A collateral attack is an attempt to impeach a judgment before a court other than the one that rendered it, in an action other than the one in which it was rendered, in an attempt to avoid, defeat, or evade it, or deny its force and effect, in some incidental proceeding not provided by law for the express purpose of attacking it.

Counsel: Brandon Brown and Jessica Donels of Parrish Kruidenier Dunn Gentry Brown Bergmann & Messamer L.L.P., Des Moines, for appellant.

Thomas J. Miller, Attorney General, David S. Gorham, Special Assistant Attorney General, and Robin G. Formaker, Assistant Attorney General, for appellees.

Judges: McDermott, J., delivered the opinion of the court, in which all justices joined.

Opinion by: McDERMOTT

Opinion

[*393] McDERMOTT, Justice.

In 2016, Rickie Rilea received a ticket for speeding in a construction zone issued by an Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) Motor Vehicle Enforcement officer. He pleaded guilty to the charge and paid the \$465 associated fine. He later filed a lawsuit challenging the legal authority of IDOT officers to issue traffic citations. On appeal of that issue, we held that IDOT officers at the time lacked authority to stop vehicles and issue citations for offenses unrelated to operating authority, registration, size, weight, and load. *Rilea v. Iowa Dep't of Transp.*, 919 N.W.2d 380 (Iowa 2018).

In the same lawsuit, Rilea sued the State of Iowa, the IDOT, and several individual[**2] IDOT officials contesting the payments the State collected (prior to a law change in May 2017) from fines resulting from convictions on unauthorized IDOT-issued citations. In this aspect of his case now before us, Rilea contends that the defendants improperly reaped the benefit of fines from these tickets, and that he and others like him should have their payments returned to them. His petition includes a request to certify the matter for class-action relief to address the thousands of citations that IDOT officers issued without authority for decades. In this count

of his lawsuit, he pleads his cause of action against the defendants as one of unjust enrichment.

The defendants moved for summary judgment, arguing that (1) they were entitled to sovereign immunity, (2) the defendants were not unjustly enriched, and (3) Rilea's claim was barred as an improper collateral attack on his speeding ticket conviction. The district court resolved the first issue in Rilea's favor, holding that sovereign immunity didn't apply. On the second issue, it held as a matter of law that no claim for unjust enrichment could lie against any defendants *except* the State of Iowa. And on the third issue, the district ^[**3] court held that the unjust enrichment claim was indeed an improper collateral attack on Rilea's conviction, thus warranting dismissal of Rilea's lawsuit.

Rilea appeals, challenging only the third issue—whether his unjust enrichment claim is an improper collateral attack on his speeding ticket conviction. ^{HN1} We review rulings on motions for summary judgment to correct legal error. *Pitts v. Farm Bureau Life Ins.*, 818 N.W.2d 91, 96 (Iowa 2012). We're confronted with a purely legal question; the material facts of the case are straightforward and undisputed.

^{HN2} Unjust enrichment is a doctrine of restitution. *Smith v. Harrison*, 325 N.W.2d 92, 94 (Iowa 1982). It requires a plaintiff to prove the defendant received a benefit at the expense of the plaintiff under ^[*394] circumstances that make it unjust for the defendant to retain the benefit. *Endress v. Iowa Dep't of Hum. Servs.*, 944 N.W.2d 71, 80 (Iowa 2020). The circumstances giving rise to an unjust enrichment cause of action might more appropriately be labeled "*unjustified enrichment*" seeing as our focus centers on whether there has been a "transfer of a benefit without adequate legal ground." Restatement (Third) of Restitution & Unjust Enrichment § 1 cmt. *b* at 6 (Am. L. Inst. 2011). In this case, Rilea's unjust enrichment claim seeks to disgorge from the State an acquired benefit (money) based on the State's alleged wrongful interference with Rilea's rights (a fine arising from an unlawful ^[**4] IDOT-issued ticket). See *Id.* § 3, at 22 ^{HN3} ("A person is not permitted to profit by his own wrong."). Because a plaintiff must show that the circumstances make it "unjust" for the defendant to retain the benefit, the circumstances in which the claim arises often determine whether the law will treat the particular enrichment as "unjust" for purposes of imposing liability.

The circumstances of Rilea's unjust enrichment claim for the return of his criminal fine payment arises in the

context of a criminal prosecution and, more particularly, a criminal conviction. Rilea's guilty plea to the speeding charge gave rise to the associated fine. Rilea paid the fine borne of his conviction.

Rilea is entitled to the return of money he paid if what he paid belonged to him and not to the State. *Smith*, 325 N.W.2d at 94. But the money Rilea paid was owed to the State as court debt because Rilea was adjudicated guilty in state district court. Iowa Code § 602.8107(1)(a) (2016) (defining "court debt" to include fines, penalties, court costs, and surcharges). ^{HN4} And court debt is "owed and payable to the clerk of the district court." *Id.* § 602.8107(2). The fine is separate from the underlying citation. The payment Rilea made was a product of a court's adjudication.

In *Smith v. Harrison* ^[**5], we analyzed an unjust enrichment claim in circumstances where a tenant (Harrison) received benefits from a discounted rental rate on a farm lease with a landlord who shortly thereafter became the ward in a conservatorship. 325 N.W.2d at 94. We said:

Any benefits received by Harrison were received pursuant to the lease. It was not unjust for him to receive them *unless the lease should be set aside*. ^{HN5} Thus a ground for invalidating the lease must be established before a basis for restitution exists.

Id. (emphasis added). We found no ground to invalidate the lease and, thus, found no liability under an unjust enrichment theory.

Rilea doesn't claim a speeding conviction didn't occur; the court made an adjudication that Rilea committed the crime. Rilea, in this very case, has admitted again that he committed the charged traffic offense. The fact has been indisputably established. The State, in receiving payment of Rilea's fine, was "only doing what it was entitled to do based on a final and firm judgment." *Slade v. M.L.E. Inv. Co.*, 566 N.W.2d 503, 506 (Iowa 1997) (finding no liability under an unjust enrichment theory).

As the district court correctly held, the State's retention of Rilea's payment of the fine would only become unlawful if the underlying conviction ^[**6] were overturned. ^{HN6} Rilea concedes, as he must, that a conviction by a court of competent jurisdiction ordinarily isn't subject to collateral attack except through a postconviction relief challenge under the procedures in Iowa Code chapter 822. Rilea's conviction has never been challenged, let alone overturned. By now, any motions he might file in

his criminal case would be untimely, and even the [*395] three-year statutory period to file an application for postconviction relief has expired. See Iowa Code § 822.3.

HN7[↑] A collateral attack is an attempt to impeach a judgment before a court other than the one that rendered it, in an action other than the one in which it was rendered, in "an attempt to avoid, defeat, or evade it, or deny its force and effect, in some incidental proceeding not provided by law for the express purpose of attacking it." *Fetters v. Degnan*, 250 N.W.2d 25, 30 (Iowa 1977) (quoting 49 C.J.S. *Judgments* § 408) (upholding the revocation of a defendant's driving privileges following the defendant's improper collateral attack on his operating-while-intoxicated judgment). Rilea's unjust enrichment claim launches no attack on, and thus leaves intact, the criminal conviction that created the fine that he now wants returned to him. Yet the undisturbed conviction requires us to leave undisturbed [**7] too the State's lawful receipt of the fine that accompanied it.

Because the district court correctly dismissed Rilea's cause of action for unjust enrichment against the State as an unlawful collateral attack on his criminal conviction, we affirm the dismissal of his petition.

AFFIRMED.

Paul Trombino

Social Media and Business Resource Links:

City of Greeley	https://sgr.pub/4i0laJt
City of Greeley	https://speakupgreeley.com/16th-street
LinkedIn	https://www.linkedin.com/in/paul-trombino-7a9760300/
Zoominfo	https://www.zoominfo.com/p/Paul-Trombino/1527290091
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Youtube	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xI3QW_GiuDw
Youtube	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9jLcPfh9jU
Youtube	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjtD6wdZCq4
Youtube	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILj7sLDXeal
McClure Vision	https://sgr.pub/4IfvJLC
Cars and Racing	https://carsandracingstuff.com/library/t/trombinopauliii.php
Equipment World	https://sgr.pub/3Yf4fM3
IOWAABI.org	https://sgr.pub/3E4u4HP
Congress.gov	https://www.congress.gov/115/chrg/shrg27320/CHRG-115shrg27320.htm
X	https://x.com/onitrombino
Facebook Mention	https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1137086331670988&id=100061088959513&_rdr
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Paul Trombino

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February 13, 2025

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April 07, 2021

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Palm Coast to appoint District 3 candidate; Replacement chosen at April 15 council meeting

Daytona Beach News-Journal (Florida)

March 12, 2025 Wednesday

1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. N2

Length: 483 words

Byline: By, Colleen Michele Jones, Daytona Beach News-Journal

Body

Palm Coast is a city in transition, and the latest turn of events shoring up that description is the resignation of District 3 Councilman Ray Stevens, who stepped down Feb. 28.

On Tuesday, the Palm Coast City Commission agreed to choose a replacement for Stevens at its April 15 meeting.

Stevens, 74, cited health issues as the reason for his resignation. He had taken office Nov. 19 of last year.

Palm Coast Mayor Mike Norris said it was the right thing to do.

"He did the honorable thing by resigning," Norris said at the March 4 City Council meeting.

With Stevens no longer part of the council, the four remaining members will need a majority vote to appoint someone to the District 3 seat, which roughly runs east of Belle Terre Parkway/Boulevard, south of Buddy Taylor Middle School and south of Blare Drive.

Applications for District 3 replacement being accepted

The city has already begun receiving applications for the position, with interviews to follow.

The appointed replacement member will serve from April 15 until a November 2026 special election, when voters will elect a new District 3 representative to complete the final two years of Stevens' term, which ends in November 2028.

Aside from Vice Mayor Theresa Pontieri, who is two years into her four-year term, the rest of the Council is relatively new to local politics.

Stevens was sworn in on in November, along with new Mayor Mike Norris, and District 1 City Council member Ty Miller. Councilman Charles Gambaro is also a recent addition. He was appointed to fill the District 4 seat vacated by Cathy Heighter's resignation in August 2024. Gambaro was approved by a vote of 3-1 and was sworn in Oct. 1.

In an interview with The News-Journal this week, Norris acknowledged that while the team is fairly new and there is always a learning curve, he believed they were all putting their best effort forward and worked well together.

Palm Coast to appoint District 3 candidate Replacement chosen at April 15 council meeting

"I think we're all engaged, and it's also a lot about compromise," Norris said.

'The right person to move

us in the right direction'

Adding to the city's transition is the continued search for a city manager, a key position. While the city opened the search in late November and hoped to have someone in place by now, the council on March 4 agreed to extend the hunt for a few more months to consider more candidates.

Six candidates were named as tentative applicants of interest: Paul Trombino II, Kara Boyles, Richard Hough, Jay Wilverding, Michael Reese and Robert Hemminger. They will be interviewed in the meantime.

Former Deputy City Manager Lauren Johnston has been serving in that capacity for the last year on an interim basis following the departure of Denise Bevan.

"We definitely want to get the right person to move us in the right direction," Norris said. "It's a big job."

Given the revolving door at City Hall, Norris also emphasized an interest in longevity would be important in the choice, as well.

Load-Date: March 12, 2025

End of Document

Unimpressed, council cuts manager pool from 38 to 6

The Palm Coast Observer (Florida)

January 30, 2025

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Section: NEWS; Pg. 1A

Length: 274 words

Byline: PUBLISHER, BRIAN MCMILLAN

Body

After a consultant reviewed many of the 38 candidates who have applied to become Palm Coast's next city manager, the City Council was unimpressed, reaching a consensus to extend the request for resumes for another month.

"We can't afford to get this decision wrong," City Councilman Charles Gambaro said at the Jan. 28 workshop, "and there's absolutely no reason to rush to failure. Our community deserves the right fit for us to move forward."

At the recommendation of the consultant, Doug Thomas of Strategic Government Resources, the council did rank 16 candidates on a scale of 1 to 3, and the top 6 will be interviewed further: Paul Trombino III, Kara Boyles, Richard Hough, Jerome (Jay) Wilverding, Michael Reese and Robert Hemminger.

The top local candidate, attorney and former sheriff Jim Manfre, did not make the next round.

City Councilman Ty Miller indicated a desire to try to recruit a "rockstar" who might already be serving as a city manager somewhere else.

Mayor Mike Norris indicated that he preferred a local candidate.

"I'm really leery of hiring someone from across the country," he said. Later in the meeting, he made a plea for more local, qualified candidates: "For the community at large, apply for the job." City Councilwoman Theresa Pontieri was concerned that many of the candidates who applied had also applied to other searches conducted by Strategic Government Resources. Will the next round be any better?

In the coming weeks, the top six candidate will be interviewed via questionnaires and video clips.

"This is a big deal for the city, and we want to do it right," Norris said.

Email brian@observerlocalnews.com.

com.

Load-Date: February 7, 2025

Kapsch TrafficCom Supports Colorado Connected Vehicle Safety Project

ACCESSWIRE

February 13, 2025 Thursday

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Length: 795 words

Body

- Kapsch TrafficCom distributor awarded contract for signal pre-emption system in Greeley, CO
- Kapsch TrafficCom technology to increase road safety of emergency vehicles
- Project supports the "Saving Lives with Connectivity" initiative of US DOT

DULUTH, GA / ACCESSWIRE / February 13, 2025 / The city of Greeley, Colorado, awarded valued Kapsch TrafficCom distributor AM Signal a contract to enhance the safety of emergency vehicles with the deployment of connected vehicle (CV) technology on 45 intersections. The CV system reacts to approaching emergency vehicles and automatically adapts traffic lights so that the vehicle can pass the intersection without endangering itself and other road users.

(Getty/Wirestock)

Paul Trombino III, Director at the Public Works Department for the City of Greeley, comments: " Greeley is one of the fastest growing cities in Colorado's North Front Range. As we grow, it's critical that we use innovative and creative technology to ensure we can maintain our standards for public safety. The funding provided by USDOT for the Connected Greeley - Emergency Vehicle Pre-emption Vehicle Pilot will help us improve response times for emergency vehicles and snowplows and make our streets safer by improving detection and warning systems for vulnerable road users. It's a key component of our larger vision to create an ample, easy, and connected transportation system ."

AM Signal is a valued distributor of Kapsch TrafficCom technology. Kapsch TrafficCom will provide an end-to-end connected vehicle solution to AM Signal and the city of Greeley. The system will be enabled by roadside units (RSUs) covering 45 intersections, while the city's fleet of emergency vehicles and snow plows will be fitted with 50 on-board units (OBUs) that communicate with the RSUs. The city will manage and operate the roadside infrastructure using the Connected Mobility Control Center (CMCC) software by Kapsch TrafficCom. The system can be expanded for additional connected vehicle use cases in future.

"AM Signal is very excited to launch this advanced project with our selected partners Kapsch & DERQ for the city of Greeley. Greeley is a long-standing customer, and we could not be happier in supplying the hardware, software and technical support needed to advance their roadways. This is one of the most technical ITS projects going on currently in Colorado and we are honored Greeley has entrusted AM Signal as a valued partner to deliver the needs of the project ," says Zac Ward, Vice President of AM Signal.

The project aligns with the City of Greeley's Vision Zero initiative and the U.S. Department of Transportation's "Saving Lives with Connectivity" initiative aimed at reducing deaths and serious injuries through a national connected vehicle deployment plan. Kapsch TrafficCom is committed to the national, widespread deployment of secure, interoperable connected vehicle technologies, and is proud to be a catalyst for emerging technology adoption in North America.

"Connected vehicles represent the future of our industry by providing tangible solutions to saving lives and reducing serious injuries," says JB Kendrick, President of Kapsch TrafficCom North America. "This project underscores our expertise and commitment to leveraging advanced technologies to enhance road safety and traffic efficiency. By integrating connected vehicle systems and other emerging technologies, we are paving the way for a safer and more sustainable transportation ecosystem in our region."

More information: [Press](#) | [Kapsch TrafficCom](#)

Kapsch TrafficCom is a globally renowned provider of transportation solutions for sustainable mobility with successful projects in more than 50 countries. Innovative solutions in the application fields of tolling, tolling services, traffic management and demand management contribute to a healthy world without congestion.

With one-stop-shop-solutions, the company covers the entire value chain of customers, from components to design and implementation to the operation of systems.

Kapsch TrafficCom, headquartered in Vienna, has subsidiaries and branches in more than 25 countries and is listed in the Prime Market segment of the Vienna Stock Exchange (ticker symbol:KTCG). In its 2023/24 financial year, about 4,000 employees generated revenues of EUR 539 million.

Press contact: Sandra Bijelic Head of Corporate Communications Kapsch TrafficCom AG Am Europlatz 2, 1120 Vienna, Austria P +43 664 628 1720 sandra.bijelic@kapsch.net Ashley Boncimino Regional Marketing Manager Kapsch TrafficCom North America 2855 Premiere Parkway, Duluth, GA 30097 P +1 864 735 2076 ashley.boncimino@kapsch.net

Further information: www.kapsch.net/ktc

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SOURCE: Kapsch TrafficCom AG

[View the original press release on accesswire.com](#)

Load-Date: February 13, 2025

End of Document

Greeley City Council approves Safe Streets 4 All to reduce fatal crashes within the city

Greeley Tribune (Colorado)

January 24, 2025 Friday

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Section: CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Length: 602 words

Byline: Tyler Duncan

Body

The city of Greeley will move ahead with a plan to eliminate all traffic fatalities in 20 years.

Greeley City Council on Tuesday approved the Safe Streets 4 All Vision Zero Action Plan in a 5-2 vote. Vision Zero is a strategy that aims to eliminate serious injuries and fatalities from dangerous road conditions, operating on the belief that all traffic collisions are preventable.

Under the Safe Streets 4 All project, the city will focus on managing excessive speeds and addressing high-risk areas, which include most of downtown and U.S. 34, due to the frequency of collisions.

City staff proposed several new regulations when the plan was previously presented to the council, such as implementing more roundabouts, which have been shown to reduce crashes by 80%. The city also suggested reducing the default speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph and plans to construct protected bike lanes within the year.

According to the Greeley Public Works Department, there have been 16,648 crashes in the city from 2014-23, and 269 resulted in serious injuries and 80 of those crashes resulted in deaths.

"Often times, I feel like I'm engaging in risky behavior when I walk to work," lifelong Greeley resident Leah Bookman said during the public hearing Tuesday. "I applaud the city for finally bringing some structure and safety to our roads."

Jim Riesberg, the coordinator for Greeley Walks, also voiced his eager support for this new plan on Tuesday. Riesberg congratulated city officials on their good work and promised that Greeley Walks would provide the city with whatever support they needed.

"As the coordinator of Greeley Walks, we are prepared to share this project with residents through educational pop-up events and inform the public of its timeline and progress to truly make this a community effort," he said.

Despite the outpouring of community support, At-Large Councilman Brett Payton and Councilman Johnny Olson of Ward 3 had reservations about the plan. Both were concerned about what they described as a potential "blank check" that they may be handing to the city, as the motion had no associated cost despite the numerous road projects involved.

"There isn't a cost associated with this as the motion is to adopt a safety protocol and plan to embed it in future projects," Public Works Director Paul Trombino said.

Trombino elaborated that the action plan would be a new framework in which the city would plan future road projects. No price was added to the motion as no projects would be approved by the passing of this plan.

"This plan will fundamentally change how Greeley residents move, and we don't know the effects of that," Olson said. "I'm all for safety, and I'm a fan of this plan, but I have to be honest, I haven't read everything in this plan, I haven't read about each project, and I'm wary of approving this plan without knowing everything that's in it."

Councilman Tommy Butler of Ward 1 and Councilwoman Deb Deboutez of Ward 2 were very supportive of the plan and its benefits to the residents they represent. The city's study showed 84% of all traffic fatalities involving pedestrians and bicyclists occurred in Wards 1 and 2.

"I'm very much in support of this plan," Deboutez said. "If we can make our streets safer for our citizens, let's adopt this plan. We can have these budget discussions when it's time to have them."

The Safe Streets 4 All Action Plan passed in a 5-2 vote, with Payton and Olson being the only council members who voted against it. Before the vote, Trombino confirmed with the council that none of the proposed changes would be implemented immediately.

Load-Date: January 25, 2025

End of Document

Greeley Public Works petitions to have city road projects listed as regional priorities in 2025

Greeley Tribune (Colorado)

January 21, 2025 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS

Length: 797 words

Byline: Tyler Duncan

Body

The Greeley Public Works Department will propose two road projects on the city's west side to regional planners as priorities, which could accelerate development.

The city will propose the Weld County Road 17 and U.S. 34 interchange project and the multimodal crossing and mobility hub at 131st Avenue project for prioritization. These projects will be submitted to the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization, the transportation and air quality planning agency for portions of Larimer and Weld counties, to be added to their 10-year Priority List, which is updated annually.

The interchange project will address growing traffic impacts and the failing intersection at Weld road 17 and U.S. 34. Due to new developments being constructed north and south of the intersection, city officials expect even more traffic in the area and they want to get ahead of a potential issue.

"The I-25 corridor has been a focus for the past 10 years, and I think U.S. 34 is the next corridor that the North Front Range (Metropolitan Planning Organization) will be focused on," Councilman Johnny Olson said.

This desire is also shared by Johnstown, Loveland and Windsor, according to city staff. The project is expected to bring about significant crash reduction, mobility improvements and congestion relief.

The mobility hub is a project that the city agreed to take on as one of its obligations to the proposed Greeley Westside Project that looks to develop the west side of Greeley with new shopping centers and the new Colorado Eagles hockey arena. The mobility hub is expected to further reduce traffic through the interchange. According to Public Works Director Paul Trombino, the planned bridge will reduce traffic through the Weld road 17 and U.S. 34 intersection by 25%.

In addition to supporting the interchange project, the mobility hub will connect U.S. 34 regional transit, intercity buses and 10th Street Bus Rapid Transit to developments in west Greeley. The mobility hub will become the western stop for the 10th Street bus route.

"I think we can definitely get the (Weld road) 17 project because we have those other communities on it. We probably won't get this other one. It'll still be a part of the North Front Range's plan, but it won't be a Tier 1 priority," Olson said, drawing on his experience as the former regional director of the Colorado Department of Transportation.

The city deemed both road projects critical because of the value they expect they would offer residents. If they're listed as priorities, the projects will become part of the state's transportation plan. This would open up additional funds and resources for the projects, meaning they would likely be completed faster.

The city currently does not have a timeline for construction with or without inclusion on the priority list.

Council members briefly debated the actual speed of the acceleration. Councilman Brett Payton commented that even if the proposed projects got on the list, they might be bumped down in favor of an Interstate 25 project until it's no longer deemed a priority.

Olson disagreed, still believing that U.S. 34 would be the next corridor of focus. Payton said the projects will take more time than the priority list would imply, as the city will need to wait 18 months to get approval from CDOT since it involves U.S. 34.

Councilman Tommy Butler questioned the decision to put these road projects up for priority when other existing intersections are congested and the site of several pedestrian deaths.

"I struggle with this new interchange when we've had pedestrian deaths at 11th (Avenue) and (U.S.) 34 and other interchanges that are bad now," Butler said. "Why would we put this over the existing problems we have now?"

Trombino said these two projects have been city priorities for a long time given the anticipated growth toward west Greeley. The timing of the city being in a position to present these projects and the scheduled development in the area created an opportunity to prioritize these projects, he said.

Additionally, Trombino pointed out that the Safe Streets 4 All Action Plan would already be addressing several of the safety issues that Butler expressed concern about. Safe Streets 4 All is another public works project that aims to make major road changes in Greeley to eliminate traffic deaths over the next 20 years. It goes before city council for a vote on Tuesday.

The North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization will review the proposed projects on Jan. 30 and will announce which projects were approved in a public meeting held at 6 p.m. Feb. 6, at the Weld County Administration Building, 1150 O St., Greeley. Residents can also attend the meeting virtually and receive meeting material when they are published at bit.ly/3Ed9xjT.

Load-Date: January 22, 2025

End of Document

Greeley to consider new traffic system that aims to eliminate traffic fatalities in 20 years

Greeley Tribune (Colorado)

January 9, 2025 Thursday

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Section: BUSINESS

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Byline: Tyler Duncan

Body

Greeley city staff hope to see the city council adopt a new traffic strategy later this month, setting an ambitious goal to end serious injuries and deaths due to traffic incidents by 2045.

Staff on Tuesday presented the Safe Streets 4 All Vision Zero Action Plan, which is in its final stage of development before it can be brought to the council for approval on Jan. 21.

Vision Zero is a strategy that aims to eliminate serious injuries and fatalities from dangerous road conditions, operating on the belief that all traffic collisions are preventable. It is endorsed by the U.S. Department of Transportation. This strategy implies that the current way roads and traffic are dealt with operates under the idea that all drivers are good drivers all of the time, whereas Vision Zero factors in human error.

"Everyone makes mistakes," Deputy Chief Engineer Steven Younkin said. "But those mistakes should not lead to a person's death."

The Greeley Public Works Department has spent the last year gathering traffic data to create action steps, safety countermeasures and an implementation plan for this new strategy.

From 2014-23, public works recorded 16,648 crashes in the city. This number includes incidents involving bikes or pedestrians, meaning not every crash was a vehicle collision. Out of the recorded crashes, 80 were fatal and 269 resulted in serious injury.

Under the Safe Streets 4 All project, the city would focus on managing excessive speeds and addressing high-risk areas, which include most of downtown and U.S. 34 due to the frequency of collisions.

"The vast majority of severe injury and fatality crashes occur in Wards 1 and 2. Eighty-four percent of all pedestrian and bicycle fatalities also occurred in those wards," Public Works Director [Paul Trombino](#) said about crashes on Greeley's east side.

Councilwoman Deb Deboutez, who represents Ward 2, asked whether a pedestrian bridge over U.S. 85 would help mitigate these issues. Younkin stated that public works couldn't commit to such an endeavor but agreed that could help solve the problem.

City staff recommended several speed reduction methods, including replacing intersections with roundabouts which has been shown to reduce traffic collisions by 80% and performing lane reconfiguration which reduces collisions by 40%. Lane reconfiguration would involve reducing the width of the road so that drivers would be naturally slower in those areas.

According to research presented to the city council, the likelihood of a fatal crash doubles for every increase of 10 mph. Drivers are 3.7 times as likely to get in a severe injury crash when going above 55 mph, and pedestrians hit by a car going 40 mph have a 46% chance of dying.

As such, city staff recommend reducing the default speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph.

City staff also proposed educational outreach programs about safe driving methods. If approved, the city will host three pop-up events and host information sessions at the farmers market.

The city would also look to redesign the roads in the high-risk areas, including changes such as raising medians and establishing turn-on-red restrictions or rest-on-red lights at intersections. Rest-on-red lights remain red until vehicles are detected at the intersection.

With the lengthier timeframe of many of the solutions in the plan, Councilman Tommy Butler asked what changes under the plan residents would see within the year. Protected bike lanes would be implemented by the end of the year, Younkin answered.

"It's killing three birds with one stone," Younkin said. "It slows people down, provides a protected space for bicyclists and provides better visibility for people at crosswalks."

City council has yet to approve the project, and city staff hasn't finalized the plan in its entirety yet. Mayor John Gates, however, expressed nothing but enthusiasm for the project.

"There's hardly anything more important to an elected official than public safety," Gates said. "I support 100% of everything that's been discussed here."

Staff will take the Safe Streets 4 All plan before the city council for a vote at the meeting starting 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 21 at the Council Chambers, 1001 11th Ave.

Editor's note: This story has been updated to correct the location of the Jan. 21 vote.

Load-Date: January 15, 2025

End of Document

Greeley Public Works plans to spend \$10 million on sidewalk repair in 2025

Greeley Tribune (Colorado)

December 20, 2024 Friday

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Section: BUSINESS

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Byline: Tyler Duncan

Body

Greeley Public Works Deputy Chief Engineer Steven Younkin updated the city council Tuesday on sidewalk repair and construction projects, explaining why downtown is given priority for repairs and construction over other parts of the city.

The city has recently completed sidewalk repair and construction projects at 5th Street, between 14th and 23rd avenues and in the Maplewood and Wilshire neighborhoods along 13th Street. Additionally, the city has finished two pavement rehabilitation projects through its Keep Greeley Moving program.

The four projects cost the city more than \$13 million, according to Younkin.

The city maintains more than 400 miles of sidewalks, and there are 62 miles of sidewalks that have yet to be built across the city. Of those 62 miles, the city is prioritizing 9 miles for construction due to its proximity to major roadways.

According to a study the city conducted earlier this year, the sidewalks with the greatest foot traffic are those around the University of Northern Colorado and in downtown Greeley. The city found in a census taken on weekdays during the spring of 2024 that pedestrians made about 7,800 trips along those sidewalks, with an average trip length of four-tenths of a mile. More than half of those trips were for shopping or getting home.

"People are making a lot of trips in the city via sidewalk," Younkin said. "I think we often envision it'll be for recreational use, but we found that the actual most common use is for shopping and trips home."

The public works department determines the priority of sidewalk repairs based on its proximity to parks and nature areas, zones marked for economic growth called priority investment zones, schools, parks and transit areas.

Another factor in prioritization is the level of traffic stress an area receives, which is determined by the nearby traffic volume, traffic speed, width of the sidewalk and the distance from the sidewalk to the road. Public works staff ranks the sidewalk's stress level on a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 being the highest amount of stress and a sidewalk the city should prioritize. The majority of Greeley sidewalks rank around a 2 or a 3, though there are a good number of high-stress sidewalks within the city as well.

Councilwoman Melissa McDonald drew attention to one of those high-stress level sidewalks along 20th Street between the intersections of 71st and 47th avenues, where she said walking feels like she's "taking my life into my own hands" because of how fast the cars move in that area.

Younkin stated that the city is working on lowering the speed limit along that street to less than the current 55 mph limit, which he and council members agreed is not the true speed of cars traveling that road.

To make that change, city staff will need approval from the Colorado Department of Transportation since they control the speed limit on that road, and they'll need to make changes to the road to get that approval. The city is in the process of deciding what those changes will be.

"It's frustrating that we alone can't control that because that area is too fast," Mayor John Gates said. "But I know you're trying, and I thank you."

Councilman Dale Hall then asked about how much input from residents factors into prioritization for sidewalk repair. Though they listen to complaints, Younkin said, staff don't believe they're an accurate representation of need, so Public Works use other means for determining priority.

"Citizen complaints do factor into it, but we don't want that to be the only factor," Younkin said.

Public Works Director Paul Trombino was quick to add that though it's not a big factor in setting the agenda for the construction and rehabilitation of sidewalks, residents can still call the public works department or text about damaged sidewalks or roads and someone from the department will be out within 24-48 hours to address the issue.

To report a damaged sidewalk, call or text 970-350-9881, or go to greeleygov.com/services/pw/home to file a report online.

Public Works plans to spend about \$10 million on sidewalk construction and repair in 2025, which will be funded by the Keep Greeley Moving program. The program is a 0.65% tax on non-grocery purchases in Greeley that was adopted in 2015 and renewed again in 2022.

The department also plans to assess sidewalk conditions across the city by the end of next year.

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End of Document

MERGE on: With voter approval, massive Greeley transportation projects go forward. What's next?

Greeley Tribune (Colorado)

November 17, 2024 Sunday

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Section: COLLEGE SPORTS

Length: 1507 words

Byline: Anne Delaney

Body

Though the construction of two high-traffic interchanges as soon as 2029 is likely to be the most visible result of Greeley voters passing two ballot issues this month, the measures' impact will reach well beyond the U.S. 34 intersections at 35th and 47th avenues.

Parks, museums and public facilities such as the Greeley Recreation Center, the Active Adult Center, the Ice Haus and the Family FunPlex will be sustained and improved because of voter approval this month of ballot issues 2L and 2M, city officials said this week.

The city advanced the ballot issues to brace for the anticipated population growth in the area, and advocates picked up the cause with a public campaign led by The Citizens for Driving Greeley.

Construction of the interchanges is a significant component of the larger transportation effort known as the MERGE Project, or Mobility Enhancements for Regional Growth & Equity.

The total estimated cost of the MERGE Project is \$131.2 million, according to online city documents from May. The combined cost of the interchanges is projected to be about \$84.7 million, with \$46.9 million for work at 35th Avenue and \$37.8 million for 47th Avenue.

"You'll see a lot of work in 2026, 2027 and 2028," said Greeley Public Works Director **Paul Trombino**.

Greeley's population was about 61,000 when the food tax was first approved in 1990. The population increased to 112,000 in 2023, according to U.S. Census data. City projections estimate a population of more than 135,000 residents by 2032 and more than 200,000 about 20 years later.

Greeley voters approved the two connected issues by a wide margin allowing for transportation and capital project improvements focused on streets, parks and recreation facilities and public buildings. Issue 2L passed with 63% of the vote, while 2M went through with almost 67%.

"I think the margin was surprising," Greeley Mayor John Gates said. "We're in a tax-adverse society, and I understand 2L is a continuation of a tax. They (voters) had the opportunity to say 'no more,' and they didn't do that. Roads are improving, parks are second to none and recreation programs are the same. I think it's some validation."

The 2M issue asked voters to approve the city taking on \$65 million of debt for a total repayment of \$110 million to fund transportation projects including the interchanges and creation of a mobility hub to expand Greeley bus service to Centerra, Denver and Denver International Airport.

The \$65 million will be borrowed through a low-interest, 2% federally financed loan. The city plans to repay the debt by 2035 with money from the continued food tax under ballot issue 2L.

The food tax has been approved by voters every five years since it was introduced. The vote this year allows the city to extend the 3% tax on food indefinitely, eliminating the sunset clause for the financing or refinancing of the city capital improvement projects.

"With the new version without a sunset, it allows for longer term planning," said Culture, Parks and Recreation Director Diana Frick. "We could plan five years out, but not past that. It (five years) does sound like a long time until you think about four museums, an adult center, the Rodarte Center, two recreation complexes, 40 parks and all need repair and maintenance."

Eligible city residents may apply for a food tax rebate. This year, the rebate was \$100 reimbursement per person for taxes paid on food purchases made in 2023.

The city's financial expenditures under the approved ballot issues will be reviewed by a citizens committee. The committees will be appointed by the Greeley City Council, and the council will also set criteria for the appointments.

"The city does a great job to make sure they get people of all thoughts and all processes to oversee this," said Julie Jensen, a longtime Greeley resident and co-chair of the Citizens for Driving Greeley Committee. "So that, again, the money is going to continued to be spent how it's said it's going to be spent."

City Clerk Heidi Leatherwood said the appointment of the committees will either be facilitated by a resolution or a motion at an upcoming meeting. Council's next meeting is 6 p.m. Tuesday in the council chambers in Greeley City Center, 1001 11th Ave.

Leatherwood recommended following the council agendas on the city's online meeting portal, greeleyco.portal.civicclerk.com.

Frick said the city is looking at future upgrades at the Family FunPlex and renovations at Centennial Pool with the food tax renewal. Projects at those sites are high on the department's priority list, Frick said.

Work will also be considered at the Active Adult Center on 10th Avenue including carpeting, air conditioning and updating spaces.

"Now, we're doing longer-term planning, knowing priorities might shuffle," Frick said. "Our hope is that with all of the growth projections, we anticipate the funding will get larger as Greeley continues to grow."

Frick estimated the city brings in about \$10 million from the food tax. She said the culture, parks and recreation department historically receives about 40%-50% of those funds.

The food tax earlier this year supported remodeling of locker rooms at the Greeley Recreation Center. The tax was not scheduled to expire until 2026, but city leaders wanted to add the item to the ballot this year. If the issue failed, the city likely would've tried again for passage in 2025.

The MERGE project's mobility hub will be located between the interchanges on the north side of U.S. 34 and within the east side of the Centerplace commercial area. The hub will allow for regional transportation access by expanding Greeley's bus and mobility options.

A tunnel path will be constructed 5 feet below the existing grade of U.S. 34 to allow access from the hub to nearby neighborhoods on the south side of the highway and to a parking area on the north side.

A video on The Citizens for Driving Greeley website shows a perspective of the future site looking toward the southwest. A portion of U.S. 34 will be raised 10 feet above the existing grade of the highway. A transit regional median hub for buses will be constructed on the raised section of U.S. 34, and allow for access to the tunnel on ground level.

The origin of the work on the intersections dates back about 10 years, Trombino said. The next step on the interchanges will be working with the U.S. Department of Transportation on an agreement to use \$20.5 million from a grant announced during the summer. The grant is part of the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity program, which provides funding for capital investments in surface transportation.

In 2025, the city will begin meeting with residents and businesses around the project area. Trombino expects the city to reach out in the early spring, March and April. He said the city will also host public meetings.

"We want to make sure people are involved in the process and we're getting input on how to approach the work and mitigate issues," he said. "We want to have good engagement."

City environmental screening documentation shows about 37% of the population within a one-half mile buffer area of the project is considered minority, Black, Indigenous and people of color. The documentation also indicates there are several households in the buffer zone considered below the poverty level. A public housing facility called Andy's Place is adjacent to the project area at 2831 W. 28th St.

"Additionally, several households use public transportation which increases the benefit of the added mobility hub," the document says. "A more in-depth review of other EJ (environmental justice) factors will be needed as the project continues."

"It's been a long time coming and it's important to re-engage the community because we're on a path to making these changes," Trombino said.

The city of Greeley is committed to spending about \$66.2 million, which is 51% of the project cost. The money will come from local funds and federal financing.

Gates said earlier this month the city also has about \$30 million of funds to contribute from a voter-approved tax four years ago. At the time, the city was to share the cost with the Colorado Department of Transportation.

CDOT now will pick up about \$8 million of the cost. Federal grants will cover about \$51.6 million, and regional transportation agency North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization will cover about \$5.4 million.

Trombino said the city's current focus among transportation improvement projects lies with the MERGE Project. Trombino said it's the No. 1 priority. He added there are other impactful projects that will need attention in the future. Those cover a wide geographic area through Greeley from 8th Avenue in the east to 83rd Avenue on the west side.

"We have to get this one done first," Trombino said of the 35th and 47th avenues and the mobility hub. "It's a key link for all of the other projects from the east side and heading to 83rd. They're key ingredients to mitigating traffic and improving safety."

Load-Date: November 17, 2024

Greeley's Ambitious Plan to Become Colorado's Third Major Airport

Transportation Monitor Worldwide

September 18, 2024 Wednesday

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Length: 1386 words

Body

The City of Greeley is setting its sights on transforming the Greeley-Weld County Airport (GXY) into a commercial facility in a bold move that could reshape air travel in northern Colorado. With plans to pursue Part 139 certification from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), city officials are laying the groundwork for scheduled passenger service and increased corporate activity. This ambitious vision aims to position Greeley as a key gateway to the Front Range.

AirlineGeeks had the opportunity to interview **Paul Trombino**, the current Director of Public Works for the City of Greeley, to help understand his vision and the city's ambitions for the airport. **Trombino** assumed the role of Director in June 2021 and has now added the airport to his list of areas where the city has significant growth potential.

The Greeley-Weld County Airport

Greeley-Weld County Airport was built in 1944 as a small regional airport. In the late 1940s, it saw small commercial service operations, with Challenger Airlines serving Greeley as a stop between Billings and Denver along with Salt Lake City and Denver. Ultimately, service ended, and the airport has since become a general aviation airport with around 120,000 operations annually.

In 1996, the airport underwent its most comprehensive expansion since opening in partnership with the FAA. It constructed a new 10,000-ft runway and taxiway system, along with a terminal, administration building, and landside infrastructure improvements to improve accessibility to the airport. **Trombino** highlighted how this significant investment was a sign of a strong growth plan since 1996 and added how [the city] has always seen potential in the airport with the foundation already being set.

The airport is uniquely positioned because it already has a 10,000-ft runway. According to GlobalAir.com, the only public airports in Colorado with 10,000-ft plus runways are Colorado Springs, Centennial, Denver, Grand Junction, Greeley, Hayden, Montrose, and Pueblo.

But what sets Greeley apart from this short list of airports?

Other than Centennial, which serves as a reliever airport for Denver, all other airports already see commercial service, making Greeley an attractive airport for future service additions. In fact, according to the FAA's National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems, Greeley is currently the only public airport with a 10,000-ft runway in Colorado that is classified as a General Aviation facility.

Development Plans

As mentioned, Greeley has a unique 10,000-ft runway, but what else can the airport offer for the Front Range? For one, the airport is already profitable as a general aviation airport serving the community.

Rural airports typically operate in the red, but Greeley is in the black, which is unique, Trombino stated. The airport is projecting significant growth in the next 10 and 20 years, with revenue jumping from \$125,000,000 in 2023 to \$360,000,000 by 2033 and nearly \$700,000,000 by 2043.

Trombino is adamant that he wants the current businesses to [stay] successful, as bringing more operations to the airport will bring more customers, from maintenance to fuel, even with the city's growth plans.

Their operational outlook aligns with this vision, with projections showing growth from 120,000 operations in 2023 to 300,000 by 2033 and 600,000 by 2043.

Another major player spurring this growth is JBS USA Foods, a major meat processing company headquartered in Greeley. The company currently operates its corporate jets out of Fort Collins but is looking to move to Greeley.

JBS is looking to move to Greeley by March 2026 and needs a new hangar and taxiway built for its needs. It also needs the runway to be developed to increase weight limits from the current 45,000 lbs to a minimum of 65,000 lbs, or even 100,000 lbs. Trombino sees this opportunity as phenomenal for setting us up for success and believes it will be an excellent platform for the city to present to the FAA as a necessity for an increase in runway weight.

Trombino stated that the FAA envisions Greeley as one of the main airports in Colorado, alongside Denver and Colorado Springs.

Furthermore, the airport does not face the same constraints as similar regional airports. Many airports near the Denver metro area suffer from environmental, capacity, and space limitations, but Trombino believes that Greeley's location is insulated from such issues.

[The city views] the space in and around the airport [like] a blank canvas, He added, The other airports don't have the length that we do, and more importantly, they all have housing around them, which causes constraints that we don't face.

When specifically asked about similar competitor airports like Fort Collins-Loveland and Rocky Mountain, Trombino said that they have capacity challenges and don't necessarily have the capacity to expand.

The city also believes there is no better time than now to invest heavily in the airport.

Trombino said, If the airport doesn't follow the growth of the city, it will become an economic drag, as we think about the city in the future, including transportation.

With the recent announcement that the Colorado Eagles are moving to Greeley from Loveland and the University of Northern Colorado is building its Osteopathic Medical School in downtown Greeley, Trombino believes that all of the things are starting to align for businesses and residents for further growth and jobs.

With the Greeley-Weld County Airport directly sitting within the Colorado Enterprise Zone, it provides tax advantages for new businesses to invest in and around the airport. The city recently presented its Strategic Airport Business Plan to the FAA, highlighting how the airport can also develop an Agriport and Railport to connect. A major highlight is that the city has the ability to create a spur off the main [Union Pacific] line, which, in Trombino's view, will open the airport and the surrounding area for further freight operations.

Future Airport Vision

Its clear that the city has a strong vision for the airport, but building it up and making it commercially successful requires more than solid infrastructure. This includes interest from operators in utilizing the airport, alongside facing issues such as not being equipped with an air traffic control tower.

Trombino believes that there are multiple ways for Greeley to tackle this.

The 233rd Space Group is located right next to the airport and already utilizes some areas of the field. **Trombino** believes that if the city made improvements, [the airport] could be a great training space for the Air Force National Guard.

The city is exploring the option of taking advantage of its partnership with Aims Community College. **Trombino** views Aims as such a good partner and potentially building an ATC tower in partnership with Aims to allow training to occur at the airport, too.

Other ideas have also been proposed, including utilizing a remote tower system, which would be cheaper for the airport in capital and labor costs.

Im not afraid of having Greeley at the forefront of technology. Its a matter of where we are and where the industry is heading, [so] we havent built a new airport in the country since 1995.

The logical next step is to understand the market dynamics of the surrounding area and how to convince airlines and passengers to select Greeley over Denver and Cheyenne, both of which are an hour away from the city, with all of the developmental plans starting to take place.

Trombino says the city wants to start conversing with carriers like JSX and others by the end of the year. His reasoning stems from reduced security costs and a proven model at Rocky Mountain.

Airlines such as JSX will be important and could be competitive at an airport like Greeley.

He compared the airport to existing models like Chicago-Midway or Orange County, allowing people to get in and out of the busier metro more efficiently than the bigger, more congested airports nearby.

The city thinks that this needs to be a high-end airport, with **Trombino** personally believing that Greeley could become a primary ancillary airport in the Front Range.

Trombino proudly concluded, The airlines have to know who we are and that we are coming.

I think we will be the new place to be, and the people in the northern Front Range will be surprised, **Trombino** added during the interview.

Load-Date: September 18, 2024

Weld, Greeley agree to share \$5M in startup construction at airport

Greeley Tribune (Colorado)

August 27, 2024 Tuesday

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Byline: BizWest

Body

Improvements to the Greeley-Weld County Airport are getting ready for takeoff as the governmental bodies running the airport work on an agreement to share costs of improvements.

The City of Greeley presented its proposed long-term airport strategy to improve the airport to Weld County commissioners earlier this month. The two groups have agreed to share the proposed \$5 million costs to improve the infrastructure to the east side of the airport to allow companies to build hangar space and begin work on adjoining the two taxiways. The sides are working on an intergovernmental agreement that will spell out each other's obligations.

The groups got together Tuesday morning in their quarterly joint meeting at Doug's Diner in Greeley to discuss this and other projects.

"As soon as they get it drafted, we'll look at it for approval," said Kevin Ross, Weld County commissioner and member of the Greeley-Weld County Airport Authority. "I'm expecting it any time. We're moving really fast on this one.

"The county hasn't invested anything in the airport in nearly 30 years, so this is an opportunity for us to put in a little capital to help that out," Ross said. "We see that airport as a diamond in the rough. And really with proximity to County Road 47/49, that airport can be a shining star. The FAA views it as one of the top three airports in the state."

Earlier this month, the FAA granted the airport \$1.4 million to rehabilitate 18,000 square yards of the existing apron pavement to maintain its structural integrity and minimize foreign-object debris. Earlier this year, the FAA granted \$850,000 to support connecting the airport's two taxiways, according to press releases from U.S. Rep. Yadira Caraveo, D-Colorado.

Ross said the two groups have agreed to split the \$5 million in costs to get the project underway. Greeley Public Works Director **Paul Trombino** told the Board of Weld County Commissioners earlier this month that he could have these initial improvements done by February, according to the Greeley Tribune.

One of the immediate concerns, Ross said, is accommodating a strong demand for hangar space.

Greeley Mayor John Gates, who also chairs the Greeley-Weld Airport Authority, said that JBS will in the coming year lose its lease in Loveland.

"They're looking for hangar space, and not only is there no space available, even if there were, the space is not large enough to accommodate one of the JBS jets," Gates said. "The first item out of the chute will be design and construction of a hangar or hangars to accommodate JBS. We're working with JBS to see that that gets done."

Ross added, "I think this is long overdue, and there's an opportunity here; you don't want to lose key employers, and other stuff here for the region. JBS is a vital part to our communities, if we can work with them and support them, and others along the way, I think, to me it makes sense."

The 20-year vision of the airport also calls for new uses, as well as increased passenger traffic. Those include industrial centers, manufacturing spaces, agricultural greenhouses and railport and agriport facilities. The configuration of the airport also would change, moving the terminal to the east side of the property.

The plan also calls for requesting that the FAA help fund and build an air traffic control tower, which the airport does not have, and fund upgrading the 10,000-foot runway to be able to handle a maximum capacity of 65,000 pounds. Now, it can only handle about 40,000 pounds.

Ross said the Weld County portion of the money will come out of its public works fund.

"We don't have a hard timeline on the next steps, but it allows us to go back to the FAA, and say, look, we're investing, what can we do to improve the runway for heavier loads? Greeley has already annexed a pretty good portion around the airport ... As far as the county goes, we've been working on County Road 66 and improving it, and that's been in our CIP for several years. That will provide another access to the airport."

Greeley's portion of the initial improvement costs would come out of its capital improvement plan, said Mayor Pro-Tem Dale Hall.

"We have come to consensus that we need to get those taxiways improved," Hall said, "and then we believe the airport is a viable gem that we need to go forward and see what else we can get done to build some more commercial activity out there."

Gates said the city presented the 20-year plan to the Greeley-Weld Airport Authority on Monday, but three board members were not present. He plans to have it presented to those members in a board meeting in September to ensure all are on board of the entirety of the plan.

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Load-Date: September 18, 2024

End of Document

Weld County commissioners approve plan to improve Greeley-Weld Airport

Greeley Tribune (Colorado)

August 15, 2024 Thursday

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Section: BUSINESS

Length: 456 words

Byline: Tyler Duncan

Body

Weld County commissioners are partnering with the city of Greeley to improve the Greeley-Weld County Airport with more hangar space and the changes needed to allow commercial flights.

The ambitious project looks to take advantage of the airport's longer-than-average runway to transform the airport into a larger commercial airport similar to the Colorado Springs airport. This would be done by strengthening the runway so that it could handle commercial airplanes. Currently, the runway can only support 40,000 pounds, which allows for smaller planes and private jets to utilize the runway but not larger planes or the aircraft used by the National Guard next door to the airport.

During a meeting with the commissioners Wednesday, Greeley Public Works director **Paul Trombino** III highlighted what steps would begin immediately with the commissioners' approval. The first step will be to build connecting roads between the runways to open up more space for hangars to be constructed. These connections will also open up more space for industrial centers and manufacturing spaces.

Trombino estimates that with the county commissioners' approval, they can have these connections between runways built by February 2025.

"This airport is a real diamond in the rough," County Commissioner Chairman Kevin Ross said. "We've got a lot of opportunity here."

Both **Trombino** and Ross assured that the plans for the airport will not result in the closure of any existing businesses at the airport. They are also making sure the new airport will not impact nearby residential areas with noise, striving to keep it below 65 decibels.

Last week, U.S. Rep. Yadira Caraveo announced that Greeley would receive two federal grants from the Federal Aviation Administration. The Airport Infrastructure Grant and Airport Improvement Program grant will provide nearly \$1.4 million to the project.

"The city of Greeley is on the rise to become one of the greatest cities in Colorado. These federal funding investments will pave the way for economic growth and more opportunities to connect our communities with an airport that reflects the rising potential of Weld County," Caraveo said.

Weld County will split the costs of this project 50/50 and with the funding provided by the FAA, county officials are confident that there is enough in the county's general funds to support such a large endeavor.

"This is the planting of the tree," Ross said. "The FAA has told us this runway is a priority and they will make the investment alongside us to upgrade this airport. We just have to be willing to plant the tree."

The commissioners unanimously agreed to support the project, and construction to improve the Greeley-Weld County airport will begin later this year.

Load-Date: September 18, 2024

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Greeley City Council supports improvements for Greeley-Weld County Airport

Greeley Tribune (Colorado)

July 28, 2024 Sunday

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Section: BUSINESS

Length: 811 words

Byline: Tyler Duncan

Body

A proposal to upgrade the Greeley-Weld County Airport on the city's east side could allow the airport to take commercial flights and add an estimated \$393 million in value to the community by 2045.

Greeley City Council supported the proposal at Tuesday's work session, after hearing a presentation from Greeley Public Works Director **Paul Trombino** III and Paul Anslow, airport development director for Bolton & Menk in Denver.

They'll take the proposal to the Weld County commissioners for consideration next. Weld County and the city of Greeley split ownership of the airport evenly.

The proposal presented to the council focused on strengthening the airport's 10,000-foot runway to support commercial flights. The proposal also emphasized the importance of adding taxiway connectors between the current runways to open up the land for additional jets and hangars, the latter of which is in especially short supply.

"The market is showing business jets are what everybody wants to fly and everybody wants to build and what everybody wants hangars for," Anslow said. "Then you get a maintenance/repair facility and somebody who works on planes, and you have jobs for the city."

The 10,000-foot runway, which was constructed in 2000, was at the center of **Trombino** and Anslow's proposal. The runway is unique among Colorado's general aviation airports due to its length, allowing for bigger planes to land easily at the airport throughout the year.

Most general aviation airport runways in Colorado are only around 9,000 feet in length. During the summer months, the air is thinner, making it more difficult for airplanes to take off. This results in planes needing to limit their weight by taking less cargo and fewer passengers.

With an additional 1,000 feet of runway at the airport, this wouldn't be an issue, allowing more efficient operations.

The only thing that currently prevents the airport from taking advantage of this unique runway is the runway's weight limit. It can only support 40,000 pounds before it becomes dangerous for planes to use. This means the only planes that can use the airport now are very small jets and propeller planes.

"You really need to get the strength up to 65,000 pounds," Anslow said. "Then you can land 737s all day long. All day long."

The immediate plan at the airport should be to connect its two runways, which would allow for an easier flow of air traffic, and accommodate hangar growth.

This new vision of the airport also calls for new uses, as well as increased passenger traffic. Those include industrial centers, manufacturing spaces, agricultural greenhouses and railport and agriport facilities. The configuration of the airport also would change, moving the terminal to the east side of the property.

The plan also calls for requesting that the Federal Aviation Administration help fund and build an air traffic control tower, which the airport does not have, and fund upgrading the runway.

"We as a group and an airport, if we would focus on the taxiways, that would lead to (FAA) funding the runway, which ... would be a 90-10 split," Trombino said.

When this proposal was presented to the FAA, Trombino and Anslow report federal officials were very supportive of the proposal. Greeley is ideally located to serve not only the residents of the city and county but also people from Wyoming to the north and people from Denver to the south.

Trombino said the FAA envisions the Greeley airport as "one of the major airports in the state."

"I like the vision a lot," said Gates. "Our airport is massive untapped potential. The bottom line is: for us to create what we want to create out there, we have to do this sooner or later."

A key concern on any plan with the airport is funding. Officials believe that the FAA can be integral in that department, but local funding would be a component. That would likely mean money from both Greeley and Weld County, entities that have historically not funded joint projects, much less played nice in the sandbox. Weld County officials maintain a long-held practice of not going into debt on any projects.

"I'd say the communication between the city of Greeley and the county is there," said Kevin Ross, a Weld County commissioner who sits on the airport authority board. "I feel like it's extremely good now to have these dialogs and explore these options. Nothing is off the table as far as I'm concerned."

"This is one of the rare airports that runs in the black," Ross said. "There is no money from the county or city, and neither entity has invested anything in a couple decades at a minimum."

Trombino and Anslow will approach the Weld County commissioners next week during the commissioner's meeting.

If the project moves forward, Anslow estimates the runway could be strengthened within the year once it gets underway.

BizWest reporter Sharon Dunn contributed to this report.

Load-Date: August 3, 2024

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Paul Trombino: Driving Greeley into the future

Greeley Tribune (Colorado)

July 5, 2024 Friday

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Section: OPINION

Length: 494 words

Byline: Paul Trombino

Body

As the director of Public Works for the city of Greeley, I hear every day from our residents how important maintaining our streets is to every neighborhood. At the same time, we want a vibrant Greeley that supports our changing city in ways that keeps this the place we all know and love. The key to balancing all these dynamics is connecting connecting work, school and play; connecting neighborhoods to each other; and connecting to our neighboring cities and towns.

To keep forging these connections, the city of Greeley is considering a package of ballot measures Driving Greeley, Protecting Greeley to ensure the city has the resources we need to take Greeley into the future. I am part of the team helping to develop the Driving Greeley package, which will invest in our streets, our transportation infrastructure and in projects to keep everyone on the road safe including cars, bikes and pedestrians.

The Driving Greeley package is two parts. The first is a federally subsidized funding mechanism. It would help Greeley pay for large capital projects with an interest rate about half of the national average, subsidized by the federal government. I like to compare a funding mechanism like this to a home mortgage it's a way to pay for important investments over a long period of time.

This would be paired with a vote to continue the existing food tax as the repayment source for this loan. Greeley voters have reauthorized this tax measure for 30 years since 1990, with wide support. This means a major infrastructure investment with no new taxes and a discount from the federal government.

With this new financing method, the projects we can accomplish will bring neighbors together, improve public safety and connect Greeley to the rest of the region and state.

Upgrades to the Highway 34 interchanges at 35th Avenue and 47th Avenue create new connectivity, bringing our friends, families and community closer together. With much-needed improvements to traffic signals, crosswalks and more, our families with children who cross Highway 34 to get to school can worry less.

We know Greeley residents like to get outside and experience all that Colorado has to offer. We can make it easier to get to the mountains, the airport and other corners of the state by adding a regional transportation center with expanded connections to neighboring cities and towns, Denver and the airport.

We will also make safety and beautification improvements to Greeley's major transportation corridors, such as downtown 8th Avenue.

These are just some of the projects we will be working on through Driving Greeley, but it will have major long-term impacts on how we all live, work and play in our city. And to be able to take advantage of a federal program to get a low-cost funding mechanism and without any new taxes, this is an important opportunity for Greeley to invest in ourselves and our future.

Paul Trombino is the Public Works director for the city of Greeley.

Load-Date: October 1, 2024

End of Document

After nearly decade, Iowa Mobile ID app is here; Allows residents to store driver's license on phone

Iowa City Press-Citizen (Iowa)

August 3, 2023 Thursday

1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A2

Length: 570 words

Byline: By, Katie Akin, Des Moines Register | USA TODAY NETWORK

Body

Iowa has launched its long-awaited mobile ID app, but don't leave your wallet at home just yet.

"Iowa Mobile ID" is available for download from the Apple App Store and Google Play.

Users may upload their driver's license to the app. As businesses and organizations adopt the mobile ID system, you'll be able to display your smartphone to verify your age or identity.

"Mobile ID is a companion to the physical card and does not replace it," Iowa Department of Transportation spokesperson Toni Smith said in an email. "Iowans should still carry their physical card."

How does Iowa's mobile ID app work?

The Iowa Mobile ID app asks users to upload a photo of the front and back of their driver's license or state-issued identification card.

Then, the app will ask the user to take a selfie while moving their head slightly from side to side. App developer IDEMIA says the moving selfie allows the app to do facial recognition to verify that you are uploading your own license.

Users will also create a PIN password for an added layer of security.

The app will combine your driver's license information and the selfie to create a mobile ID, complete with scannable QR codes.

Where can I use a mobile ID in Iowa?

Businesses and organizations are not required to accept mobile identification, so it may be a while before you can whip out your phone to show your ID at your favorite bar.

Smith said the Department of Transportation is not responsible for developing a system to verify the mobile IDs. Smith directed business owners to the department's website for more information on how organizations can prepare to accept mobile IDs.

Who made Iowa's mobile ID app? Is it safe?

Iowa contracted with IDEMIA, a France-based company that specializes in identity verification, to develop the mobile ID app.

Smith said the app will store user data only within the state system of record and within the user's device.

"App users are in control of their information, as a business cannot see it until the user consents to share it," Smith wrote in an email. "We're changing the customer experience. It's no longer a visual review of the ID - it's using a QR code to share ID. This is what makes the process new, different and more secure!"

Do I have to get the Iowa Mobile ID app?

Iowans are not required to download or use the mobile ID app.

How long has Iowa been working on mobile ID?

It's been nearly a decade since Iowa began its effort to offer mobile ID.

Former Department of Transportation Director Paul Trombino said in late 2014 the app would be available within the next year, which would have made Iowa one of the first states to adopt the technology.

State employees tested an early version of the app in 2015, but it was never released to the public.

In 2021, Apple announced it would allow iPhone owners in Arizona and Georgia to store their state ID in the Wallet app. Iowa was supposed to be one of the early adopters for Apple's mobile ID program, but it has expanded only to Colorado and Maryland.

Smith said development on the app began before there were international and national guidelines for managing digital identification cards. As those guidelines came out, Iowa delayed the app's debut to make sure it was compliant.

"This did add additional development time and additional testing time," Smith said. "Aligning to these standards drives interoperability, as there is the potential to go from state to state, even overseas."

Graphic

Iowa Mobile ID allows Iowans to use their phone to verify their age or identity.

Katie Akin/The Register

Load-Date: August 3, 2023

End of Document

Iowa launches mobile identification card app. How will it work?

Des Moines Register Online (Iowa)

August 1, 2023 Tuesday

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Section: APPS NEWS, APPS NEWS & WIRELESS INDUSTRY NEWS

Length: 614 words

Byline: Katie Akin, Des Moines Register

Body

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[Link to Image](#)

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Katie Akin is a politics reporter for the Register. Reach her at kakin@registermedia.com. Follow her on Twitter at [@katie_akin](https://twitter.com/katie_akin).

This article originally appeared on Des Moines Register: Iowa launches mobile identification card app. How will it work?

Load-Date: August 1, 2023

Mega park completes development 'trifecta'

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, IA)

9 May 2023

Web Edition

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Section: BUSINESS NEWS

Length: 496 words

Byline: George C. Ford

Body

CEDAR RAPIDS When Alliant Energy on Monday announced plans for Big Cedar Industrial Center, a 1,300-acre Mega commercial and industrial park on the southwest edge of Cedar Rapids, it added the final piece of an economic development 'trifecta.'

As Alliant subsidiary Iowa Land and Building was assembling the commitments of family farm owners to make their land available for purchase, The Eastern Iowa Airport was preparing to announce Iowa's first certified Super park and the Iowa Department of Transportation was working to create a one-of-a-kind freight hub for the state nearby.

On July 7, IDOT announced that the state had been awarded a nearly \$25.7 million federal grant to build a \$46.5 million full service intermodal facility southwest of the Highway 30 and Edgewood Road SW interchange, along the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railway or CRANDIC.

Advertisement

The logistics hub will incorporate three components intermodal facilities for freight to truck and vice versa transfer; a cross-docking facility for truck-to-truck transfers; and a bulk freight storage and transfer operation. No other Iowa intermodal facility incorporates three different freight components in a single location.

'Big Cedar and the proposed logistics hub have the potential to become one of the critical economic developers, not only for this region, but also for the state,' said Debi Durham, director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority. on Monday in Cedar Rapids. 'Iowa's largest gross state product is manufacturing and this will reduce the cost of moving products.'

Jeff Woods, CRANDIC manager of marketing and business development, on Monday said the Mega park, logistics hub and the Cedar Rapids Air and Land Super Park could not be more complimentary.

'You see these in other cities like Chicago and Kansas City where the major railroads are co-locating facilities,' Woods said. 'A major industry locates there and brings its suppliers and distributors with it.'

Woods said the CRANDIC was working on plans for the logistics hub when it learned former IDOT Director **Paul Trombino** was calling for co-locating a similar facility with a large industrial park of the size that Alliant was developing with Big Cedar.

'The two initiatives were working in parallel unbeknown to each other for a period of time,' Woods said. 'Big Cedar and the logistics hub are separate projects, but they're pretty closely affiliated. Along with the Super Park, access to interstate highways, the nation's largest railroads and a foreign trade zone, they will provide a major economic development asset for the state.'

Woods said CRANDIC is working with the Federal Railroad Administration, which oversees the \$25.7 million federal grant, and major shippers in the region to develop specifics and timelines for the project. He is confident that the remaining 40 percent, or \$21 million, of the hub's cost will be raised from private partners.

I Comments: (319) 398-8366; george.ford@thegazette.com

Graphic

Mega park completes development 'trifecta'

Load-Date: May 10, 2023

End of Document

Branstad draws the line he'd cross on a gas tax increase

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, IA)

24 April 2023

Web Edition

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Section: NEWS

Length: 1881 words

Byline: Rod Boshart

Body

DES MOINES – Gov. Terry Branstad isn't threatening a veto if the Legislature sends him a gas tax increase, but the Republican who was governor when motor fuel taxes were last raised in 1989 set conditions for his signature.

Branstad told county government officials he recognizes their needs, but feels a responsibility to prove to taxpayers the state is making the best use of its transportation resources before asking them to pay higher motor fuel taxes.

So Branstad called for the Transportation Commission and Legislature to approve to approve a list Jan. 24 of \$50 million in proposed savings and efficiencies his DOT director wants to implement to help free up dollars to bolster highway and bridge upgrades.

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That has to happen "before they even look at anything that would increase the fees that people who use our roads and bridges have to pay," he said after speaking at the counties' annual Transportation Day at the Capitol.

He's not willing to consider an increase in the current year. However, Branstad said he recognizes "in future years there is a need that has been identified and the most appropriate way to do that is for the users to pay for that – the people who use the roads and bridges," the governor said.

However, he said, "We still have a lot of people out of work and a lot of people that will be burdened by raising the motor vehicle user fee that they have to pay for their cars or trucks or for using our highways. That's why I don't think it make sense this year."

"It's never a good year to raise taxes," said Mike Hadley, a Keokuk County supervisor. "We can't cut any more pencils and paper clips." This year the board is looking at closing bridges that will affect farm operations.

Hadley told the governor he didn't run for supervisor to negatively impact anyone's economic livelihood.

Branstad challenged Hadley and other local government officials to "go home and look at how you can do things differently" in order to improve the chances of getting the public to support a future gas tax increase.

"There is still a lot of skepticism that we are managing a well as we should," he said.

Senate Transportation, Infrastructure and Capitals Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Matt McCoy, D-Des Moines, is skeptical of the savings in Trombino's recommendations. Still he appreciated the effort, but questioned whether it closed the funding gap that exists now – not in two years.

"To meet our critical infrastructure needs a minimum of \$215 million a year in new revenue," McCoy said, referring to projections by the DOT. "I am discounting there is a strong effort to set this things up for the future in terms of how we get to that \$215 million beyond fiscal 2012."

When a city official prefaced a question with, "You're probably going to yell at me, too," Branstad told him not to take it personally.

"I'm just passionate about this," he said.

It will take more than passion to convince the public of the need to raise taxes, he said, and encouraged the local government officials to encourage the Transportation Commission and Legislature to approve DOT Director Paul Trombino III's a 15-page report that included \$33 million in annual savings and \$17 million in one-time savings via detailed 13 programmatic and partnership efficiencies totaling \$50 million in either one-time or annual savings.

Road Use Tax Fund Efficiency Report FINAL

The largest component of the proposed changes calls for the department to implement a fully integrated asset management system, working closely with local jurisdictions, to support the identification of the most efficient timing and selection of transportation improvements to maximize the life of the infrastructure and the benefits to the public. The projected savings would total about \$11 million each year within the department's yearly allotment of \$200 million for highway pavement and bridge stewardship projects, according to the DOT report.

Trombino also is proposing a streamlined process for delivering highway construction projects ahead of schedule and under budget that potentially could net \$10 million in yearly savings and a review of right-of-way acquisitions with an eye on aggressively reviewing existing parcels that have been purchased but no longer are needed. The state contemplates a savings of \$1 million if those parcels could be sold.

DOT officials also will be asked to develop a long-term plan for managing interstate rest areas that could include the potential alternatives to service delivery. The agency also plans to explore sponsorship opportunities to offset the costs of maintaining rest areas, the Highway Helper program or driver's licensing station "customer queue" management systems.

Other savings could be achieved by implementing online and remote renewal of driver's licenses and other motor vehicle driver services – changes that could eliminate an estimated 124,000 customer trips to issuance locations while saving 29,000 hours annually for DOT staff and 12,000 hours for county treasurers' employees that handle driver's license-related duties.

Last fall, Branstad said he was willing to delay consideration of a state gas tax for at least a year in favor of finding efficiencies and savings within the state transportation system that could generate more money to upgrade roads, fix bridges and fund other critical needs. He issued the DOT directive just hours after receiving a citizen advisory panel's recommendations that included raising the gas tax by 8 to 10 cents a gallon and increasing the state's new vehicle registration fee from 5 percent to 6 percent.

The governor said he challenged Trombino to eliminate duplications, find efficiencies and identify administrative savings that would be the equivalent of 2 cents of fuel tax, or about \$50 million.

Members of the Governor's Transportation 2020 Citizen Advisory Commission asked the DOT Commission and department officials to recommend new funding mechanisms for high-efficiency and hybrid vehicles and study whether all vehicles using public roadways pay their fair share. The panel also recommended an increase of between 8 and 10 cents per gallon to the state's motor fuel tax.

Branstad has said he would "definitely consider" a proposed state gas tax increase in the future, but believes the savings announced on Tuesday and more than \$120 million in unanticipated federal and state transportation funding will get Iowa through a "robust" construction season in 2012.

"We do recognize in the out years there is a shortfall of about \$215 million," the governor added. "We need to come up with the most equitable way to deal with that. I happen to think that the most equitable way to deal with that is a user fee, but I also think we ought to be cognizant of the people who have to pay that.

Rep. David Tjepkes, R-Gowrie, chairman of the House Transportation Committee, said the DOT report will be of special interest to legislators crafting a bipartisan plan aimed at raising more than \$200 million annually in extra revenue to address critical transportation needs not currently being met by the state road use tax fund.

The governor had directed Trombino to identify at least \$50 million in administrative savings and efficiencies to aid in that effort and Tjepkes said however much the money the DOT can come up with would lower the amount of state gas tax that might eventually have to be raised to cover a projected shortfall in state and federal transportation aid.

Tjepkes and Sen. Tom Rielly, D-Oskaloosa, chairman of Senate Transportation Committees, have proposed a plan that would raise some vehicle registration fees and calls for an 8-cent motor fuel tax increase to be phased in over two years beginning in 2013 – a package that would raise about \$180 million a year when fully implemented. However, Tjepkes said the vehicle registration fees have run into some resistance, but that money could be supplanted by the DOT savings or the proposed gas tax increase might be revamped upward to 5 cents per gallon beginning on Jan. 1, 2013, and another 5 cents on Jan. 1, 2014.

Tjepkes said House Study Bill 547 will be assigned to a subcommittee of himself, Republican Reps. Stewart Iverson of Clarion and Gary Worthan of Storm Lake, and Democratic Reps. Jim Lykam of Davenport and Dennis Cohoon of Burlington.

Like Branstad, he wants to see the DOT implement Trombino's recommendations because "legislators want to know all efficiencies are being taken before addressing fuel tax increase."

He expects to have Nancy Richardson and Allen Thoms – co-leaders of a citizens' task force that conducted public hearings before recommending a gas tax and vehicle registration fee increases among ways to generate more revenue for roads and bridges – present their findings to legislators before his panel would start work on a bill that would include the proposed tax and fee increases this session.

Currently, Iowa drivers are assessed tax taxes of 21 cents per gallon for regular gasoline, 19 cents per gallon for ethanol-blended gasoline, and 22.5 cents per gallon for diesel fuel. Officials project that each penny increase to the state gas tax would raise about \$22 million.

Iowans for Tax Relief, a Muscatine-base group that is influential with Republicans, issued a statement last week encouraging its members to urge their local legislators to oppose a gas tax increase.

"Iowans for Tax Relief is urging the Iowa Legislature not to raise the gas tax on Iowans at a time when gasoline prices are predicted to spike. ITR believes this is the wrong time to consider an increase when Iowans will already be spending a larger portion of their family budgets on transportation," according to the group's "Watchdog" newsletter. "Furthermore, there has been little discussion or research about the impact a gas tax increase would have on communities that border Iowa. ITR believes a study of border communities would find that significant numbers of non-Iowans who come to Iowa weekly to buy gas, groceries, etc, would rethink those trips and stay home if Iowa had a higher gas tax."

Earlier story

Efficiencies identified in DOT report:

Post-Letting project cost.

Projected savings: \$10 million, annually

Rest Areas and commercial motor vehicle weight stations.

Projected savings: \$1.5 million, annually

Uniform Revenue collection.

Projected savings: \$8 million, annually

Statewide roadside improvements.

Projected savings: \$1 million, annually

Statewide traffic control devices.

Projected savings: \$1 million, one-time savings

Right of Way parcels.

Projected savings: \$1 million, annually

Asset management.

Projected savings: \$11 million, one-time savings

Highway project concepts.

Projected savings: \$5 million, one-time, over 5 years

Surface Transportation Program (STP).

Projected savings: \$5 million, annually

Local jurisdiction partnerships for roadway maintenance:

Projected savings: \$500,000, annually

Iowa DOT facilities, fleet and printing operations.

Projected savings: \$500,000, annually

Streamline regulatory permitting process:

Projected savings: \$500,000 annually

Motor vehicle enforcement.

Projected savings: \$5 million, annually

Total Annual Savings: \$33 million

Total One-Time Savings: \$17 million

Source: Governor's Office/Iowa Department of Transportation

Graphic

Branstad draws the line he'd cross on a gas tax increase

Load-Date: April 25, 2023

End of Document

Former head of Iowa DOT Trombino named president of McClure Engineering Company

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, IA)

7 February 2023

Web Edition

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Section: NEWS

Length: 364 words

Byline: Mitchell Schmidt

Body

Former Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) Director Paul Trombino III has been named president of McClure Engineering Company.

McClure Engineering Company (MEC) announced Wednesday Trombino's hiring as the Clive-based company's next president. He will officially begin his new role Jan. 3.

"Transportation economics have a broad application for helping communities and the states of the Midwest," Trombino said in the release. "I am looking forward to working with such a talented group of engineering professionals who wake up every day thinking, 'How can we help our clients build better infrastructure for the future?'"

Advertisement

Trombino in November announced that after about six years leading the Iowa DOT, he would be resigning. Trombino said he did not have specific work plans at the time.

Gov. Terry Branstad appointed Trombino as DOT director in May 2011, and he was confirmed by the Iowa Senate in June of that year.

Later that month, Branstad named Mark Lowe, who had been Director of the DOT's Motor Vehicle Division since 2009, as the DOT's interim director.

The Iowa Governor's Office eventually plans to permanently fill the director position.

The DOT, which employs more than 2,600 people, is in the midst of growth in statewide freight traffic - the number of large trucks on Iowa's primary roads has grown by 123 percent over the past three decades - and infrastructure updates, including the overhaul of the Interstate 80 and Interstate 380 interchange, among other major projects.

In addition, Terry Lutz, who has served as the MEC's president since 1985, will become the company's CEO and chairman of the board.

'This is an exciting time for our company," Lutz said in the release. 'Paul has brought a vision to our state focused on economic development by leveraging freight movement, specifically leading the development of freight commodity data. His vision and thought process align perfectly with our culture at McClure Engineering Company."

MEC was founded in 1956 and provides engineering services to public and private clients. MEC has 10 offices throughout Iowa and Missouri and is conducting work in 35 states in the U.S., according to the release.

Graphic

Former head of Iowa DOT Trombino named president of McClure Engineering Company

Load-Date: February 8, 2023

End of Document

Greeley takeover of U.S. 34, 85 business routes called logical step

The Daily Reporter-Herald (Loveland, Colorado)

October 25, 2022 Tuesday

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Section: BUSINESS

Length: 1110 words

Byline: Dallas Heltzell

Body

No firm proposals are yet on the table, say officials from the city of Greeley and the Colorado Department of Transportation, but they agree that a takeover by the city of some streets now designated as "business routes" for U.S. 34 and U.S. 85 would be a move that makes sense.

"We'd call it a jurisdictional transfer of ownership," Greeley Public Works director **Paul Trombino** said. "The state has another name for it. They call it 'devolution.'"

No such action is on Greeley's radar so far regarding Eighth Avenue as Business Route 85 or West Ninth and 10th streets as Business Route 34, **Trombino** said. However, he has noted in the past that "there is a point where it's in the state's and city's interest where we have more control over those streets.

"For any project or work, the permitting authority is CDOT, so there's reasons to do that" city takeover, he said. "It's really a city street more than anything else, so there's reasons for us to have more say as to its shape and what it looks like. I think that's more efficient for us and for the city."

It's not uncommon for a new highway bypass of a town or city to be built but for the older routes to maintain a "business route" designation. And, CDOT regional communications manager Jared Fiel added, it's not uncommon for towns and cities to take over those routes and for their numbered highway designation to disappear.

Such an event happened in Estes Park, he said, when the U.S. 34 bypass made the numbered designation along West Elkhorn Avenue unnecessary.

"That section in the middle of Estes Park doesn't operate like a state highway anymore," Fiel said. "That road kind of changed use. Generally it's a request from a municipality first, and Estes Park wanted to do traffic a different way. Sometimes a road has clearly become more of a city road."

Such devolution already has occurred in Greeley in the case of East Eighth Street toward the city's airport, which once was designated as Colo. 263. Parts of that road were turned back to the city in 2007.

"When we do that, we usually have to pay them something to take it over because they then are in charge of things like plowing and repaving," Fiel said. "It's an asset that you have to keep up."

Trombino agreed. "Streets have a function, but they're really a forever liability, so it's really important for us to treat them well. We're constantly extending their lives," he said. "The value is in the land it sits next to. It's important for

streets not to be an inhibitor to the value along the land the structures, the buildings, the land it sits next to. We want to make sure the streets are an enabler to that asset's value and growth."

As it is, Trombino said, the city has agreements with CDOT for upkeep of those business routes, "one for traffic signals and one for general maintenance," in which the state subsidizes Greeley's work.

"It's not a lot of dollars," he said. "But the contracts get redone every four years and lay out all the issues.

"We do the maintenance not only on Business 85 and 34 but also on U.S. 85 and 34," he said. "We handle a lot of the operational issues for them."

Greeley wants to have "a great partnership with CDOT, and I think we do," said Trombino, pointing to the ambitious Mobility Enhancement for Regional Growth and Equity, or MERGE project. The \$117.5 million proposal would change at-grade crossings of U.S. 34 at 35th and 47th avenues into grade-separated interchanges and create a new mobility hub in the CenterPlace area for regional and local connectivity including Bus Rapid Transit. The "equity" part is involved because the project would alleviate the separation between north and south portions of the city of Greeley by adding safe movements for pedestrians and other forms of mobility.

Trombino's department is pursuing a \$70.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, which would be added to \$31.5 million from the city, \$8 million from CDOT and \$7.5 million from the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Talk of Greeley taking back Business Routes 34 and 85 from the state may have been revived in March when Trombino told a City Council work session that his department was thinking of scrapping the one-way traffic layout of West Ninth and 10th streets between 10th and 23rd avenues. His rough-draft idea was to convert that stretch of more commercially oriented Ninth Street to four lanes of two-way traffic, while the more residential 10th Street to two lanes of two-way traffic.

Currently, that stretch of Ninth and 10th now known as part of Business Route 34 have three lanes each, with westbound Ninth handling between 7,900 and 10,550 average daily trips and eastbound 10th carrying between 8,400 and 10,700 average daily trips.

He told the council that the corridor is one of Greeley's most crash-prone because traffic routinely far exceeds the speed limit, and a solution could involve "calming" traffic through improvements to transit, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

But because it's a designated highway, he told the study session, CDOT would have to be involved in any change to the layout.

And thus, chatter about taking back the streets gained in volume over the summer.

"We've had conversations with CDOT about that," Trombino said. "We've had some dialogue about what that would look like. We have a regular meeting with CDOT Region 4 to talk about all issues.

"They would give us ownership from a permitting perspective," he said. "It would be us permitting everything along Eighth Avenue, Ninth and 10th streets."

Exchange of money between the city and state "depends on negotiations," Trombino said. "Like anything else, the streets need investment. All streets do. It's important for the city and for us to understand what those long-term implications are. If we were to go down that path, that requires a lot of conversations across lots of entities within the city – city manager, City Council, all those.

"What the financial component would be, I can't tell you," he said. "If there were a transfer of jurisdictions, it would be the right of way between the end of sidewalk to end of sidewalk. Anything that happens work, new access points, development that now requires a permit and coordination with CDOT. If that jurisdiction transfers, then we would be the authority and that right of way would transfer to the city.

"We're still trying to better understand what the framework potentially could look like," he said. "There's a lot of work yet to be done."

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Economic study proposed to advance four-lane Highway 30

Denison Bulletin & Review (Iowa)

February 18, 2022

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Section: NEWS

Length: 815 words

Byline: Dan Mundt

Body

Coalition director visits supervisors

Adam Schweers, president of the Highway 30 Coalition and former mayor of Carroll, visited the Crawford County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday.

Schweers provided an update on the group's goal of having Highway 30 expanded to four lanes all across Iowa.

He said the coalition has been around for about 30 years and was founded and run by people mostly from the eastern side of the state.

The Highway 30 Coalition has been working recently to be seen as representing all 331 miles of Highway 30 in all 12 counties across the state, he said.

Schweers said former Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) Director Paul Trombino said he didn't want to see any more four-lane roads developed in rural Iowa and that took hold in DOT staff.

"We've been fighting an uphill battle for the last 10 years since he left," Schweers said.

The coalition has three main priorities at present.

"There's a 40-mile section from Lisbon, Iowa, to DeWitt, Iowa, that we would like to see completed as four-lane, and if that were to be completed you'd be able to go from Ogden all the way to the Mississippi River on a four-lane road," he said.

The 40-mile section of road between Carroll and Ogden, and a bypass at Missouri Valley, are the other two priorities.

A study done by a firm hired by the DOT recommended that the Lisbon to DeWitt section of Highway 30 be completed as a "super two" lane highway, similar to the current stretch of Highway 30 between Denison and Carroll.

Schweers said the Carroll to Denison "super two" does not meet needs because most traffic remains stuck behind slower vehicles after the passing lanes end.

He said Iowa Economic Development Director Debbie Durham, who is a former DOT commissioner and supported the Highway 20 four-lane project, said the Highway 30 Coalition is smart to dig in their heels on the Lisbon to DeWitt section.

She said, "If you don't finish Lisbon to DeWitt (as a four-lane road), you're never going to work on the western side of the state, and we'll have essentially lost the battle," according to Schweers.

He said the coalition wants to hire engineering firm Snyder & Associates to conduct an economic study of Highway 30 that would look at a broad cross section of information, such as traffic patterns to businesses, workforce commuting patterns, and accidents.

The study will take six to eight months and will be ready when the DOT discusses a five-year plan next January.

The Highway 30 Coalition is asking governmental entities along the route to provide \$5,000 toward the study, which will cost \$97,000.

The coalition has about \$23,000 on hand, from membership dues, to be put toward the study.

Because Crawford County is not part of the group's three current priority projects, he said he would take any amount the county would offer.

Schweers said the Highway 30 corridor in Iowa is second in population only to the Interstate 80 corridor; more than 560,000 people live along the highway, which is a big portion of the state's population of 3.2 million.

ADM has invested billions in Cedar Rapids and in terminals on the Mississippi River in Clinton – but the company has to route vehicles to Interstate 80 (which contributes to congestion on the interstate) and then back up on Highway 380 because Highway 30 is unpredictable and unsafe, he said.

The Clinton County Board of Supervisors has made a four-lane Highway 30 in their county a priority, Schweers said; the county approved \$10,000 toward the coalition's proposed study and has hired a lobbyist to work on the issue at the capitol.

The mayors in Cedar County will sign a formal proclamation stating that they do not want a "super two" through their county.

"Four-lane is the only thing they want to see," he said.

Schweers said rural Iowa is at a disadvantage because industrial parks can't be certified without a four-lane road within five or six miles of the site.

Some companies might decide to move from rural communities because of the added difficulties that two-lane highways present.

A four-lane Highway 30 would not necessarily mean that all communities would have the highway expanded to four lanes within town.

The highway could be reduced to two lanes through towns – or it could bypass the town center.

Communities and farmers don't like bypasses, but engineers prefer them, Schweers said.

Schweers said his job is to promote a four-lane Highway 30, not to decide specifically where it would go in those instances.

He noted that Iowa Workforce Development has said that people will drive 25 miles farther for work on a four-lane road versus a two lane road because of the predictability and the safety factors.

The Bulletin and Review polled the supervisors at the end of Tuesday's meeting; all indicated they were in favor of funding the Highway 30 study.

Schweers made a similar presentation to the Denison City Council on Tuesday evening.

Can Iowa keep up with what it needs to ship?

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, IA)

11 January 2022

Web Edition

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Section: NEWS

Length: 1959 words

Body

They are common sights for Iowans. Trucks driving down the highway, two or three at a time, pulling grain, chemicals, the occasional blade for a wind turbine. Railcars passing through town on their way to chemical or cereal-making plants.

If agriculture and manufacturing are the historic drivers of Iowa's economy, the state's freight network—a mix of roads, highways, rail, airports, pipelines and waterways—is certainly its backbone.

It's that network that moves more than \$260 billion in products a year—corn and soybeans from Iowa fields to ethanol plants or overseas consumers, steel to machinery makers such as Kinze Manufacturing in Williamsburg, Canadian lumber to Suburban Lumber Co. in Cedar Rapids, and everyday products to households in Iowa and elsewhere.

Iowa, the producer state

'We're a producer state, which means the vast majority of what we make, we do not consume. We actually move it in the state, we move it to other states, and we move a lot of it out of the country,' said Paul Trombino, president of McClure Engineering Co. and former director of the Iowa Department of Transportation.

What Iowa ships, where it goes and how it moves won't change drastically, according to a state freight plan the Iowa DOT released last year. How much Iowa ships, though, is expected to grow greatly.

While that's good for Iowa's economy, it also means the state's freight network needs to stay in good enough shape to handle the growth.

'Agriculture and manufacturing, those two things require shipments of goods. Without a network that can tap into the national network, that keeps Iowa from being competitive,' said Amy Homan, director of carload marketing for Iowa Northern Railway Co.

Iowa's freight shipments are expected to grow more than 30 percent by 2040, to just under 600 million tons annually. And that doesn't take into account the freight that moves through Iowa but isn't produced here.

As shipments grow, so will strain on the state's freight system and the need for Iowa to maintain its infrastructure or find more efficient methods to move those products, experts and industry professionals said.

For example, the amount of freight moved by truck the dominant transportation method in Iowa is estimated to increase by more than 32 percent by 2040, causing more congestion and pavement deterioration, the DOT noted in its 2016 report.

State and federal regulation, technology changes and trouble filling jobs also can put pressure on the freight network and the companies that use it.

CRST International President David Rusch said the trucking company has not grown organically in recent years because it can't find enough drivers.

'At the end of the day, in the last four years, five years, CRST's operating companies have not grown. We have grown as a company from acquiring other companies,' Rusch said.

Better funding, better connections

Iowa's DOT has released multiple studies on how freight moves in an attempt to identify bottlenecks and potential optimization areas.

The state received a \$26.5 million grant in 2016 to build a logistics park and intermodal hub in Cedar Rapids.

Two years ago, state lawmakers approved a 10-cent gas tax increase, which puts \$200 million more per year into Iowa's road fund.

But even with these steps, state officials and industry watchers said funding and infrastructure upkeep will remain a concern.

The state already ranks among the worst in the nation for the condition of its roads and bridges, according to several reports.

'With transportation needs outpacing revenues, Iowa's multimodal freight system will be subject to more widespread deterioration, which may eventually lead to loss of access to needed services and goods,' the DOT noted in its 2016 plan.

Connecting different parts of the freight network, such as through the intermodal facility, also is necessary.

'The more efficient we make the movement for a product to move from one mode to another, the more efficient and effective we are in a competitive marketplace,' Trombino said.

Some specific spots or corridors will need more attention than others, such as Interstate 80 from Iowa City to the Mississippi River, said Garrett Pedersen, planning team leader with the Iowa DOT.

'Certainly that stretch of Iowa can't handle that type of growth in truck traffic,' Pedersen said. 'Spot locations certainly are going to need some attention to deal with that growth in freight traffic.'

Damaged infrastructure and a lack of connection points for freight transfers can increase transportation costs.

'The maintenance costs on our equipment when you're running a bad road system, or rough system, obviously is elevated because of the springs, the shocks, the beating that the tractor takes running up and down the road,' CRST's Rusch noted.

The more those expenditures go up, the more an Iowa-made product or commodity can cost, potentially pricing it out of the market. That's because transportation costs make up between 20 percent to 25 percent of final product cost, explained Craig Markley, director of Iowa DOT's office of systems planning.

'It's a big deal because if you can save on the freight, that can give you more of a competitive edge,' said Jamie O'Connell, operations manager for Suburban Lumber Co.

'What's inside the box'

In addition to funding, another solution lies with data collection.

If Iowa can better identify how freight moves and what's moving, it may not need to spend as much money on infrastructure, Trombino and others argued.

'Traditionally in transportation it's count the number of boxes in the system. What's more important is what's inside the box,' Trombino said.

For example, refrigerated trucks carrying frozen food have different needs than trucks with more durable freight.

Data can include highly detailed maps that show road conditions, traffic congestion and weather patterns in real-time.

'Once you start doing that, freight companies want to start operating here. They know that once they get here, they're going to be able to just glide through here,' said Dan McGehee, director of the National Advanced Driving Simulator at the University of Iowa.

Better data, Trombino said, can help the state make better decisions about what to improve. A crucial roadway 100 years ago may not serve the same need today.

'Being on a farm-to-market road 100 years, you didn't survive as a farmer if you didn't have good connectivity on a farm-to-market system. That market was maybe 60 or 100 miles away. Today, it can be an ocean away,' he said.

That same information, Trombino and McGehee said, also will be needed as more autonomous driving technology comes online.

'Without the map and the data, you don't have driverless vehicles, you don't have fluid freight movement,' Trombino said.

Cedar Rapids' new freight hub

\$47 million facility will shift, store loads

State officials announced last year Cedar Rapids would be home to a new intermodal facility essentially a hub to transfer freight from one transportation method to another.

The project is expected to cost about \$47 million, with \$26.5 million of that covered by federal funding.

The remainder will come from private companies, including Alliant Energy, which has taken the lead on the intermodal facility.

The hub will tap into the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railway, or CRANDIC, which is a subsidiary of Alliant. Once complete, it's expected to have three main components facilities to transfer freight from truck to rail and vice versa; a cross-dock area to transfer from truck to truck and consolidate shipments; and a bulk freight storage area.

The facility, officials said, will help make freight movement in Iowa more efficient and help cut down on shipments that have to go to larger facilities in Chicago, Kansas City and other cities

Council Bluffs has the only other similar facility in Iowa.

'If you were just looking across the land to say, 'What's the best place in the Midwest to build large logistics and intermodal connectivity between all modes of freight,' you would not put it in the middle of 10 million people in Chicago,' said Paul Trombino, president of McClure Engineering Co. in Clive and the former director of the Iowa Department of Transportation.

He likened the hub to an 'inland port.'

Cedar Rapids was the perfect spot for the hub, DOT and CRANDIC officials said, because of the amount of freight moved within and near the city.

'There's a lot that goes on from a freight perspective within an hour-and-a-half of Cedar Rapids,' said Jeff Woods, manager of marketing and business development for CRANDIC.

CRANDIC has selected a 75-acre site just south Highway 30 and Edgewood Road SW.

Construction may not begin until early 2018, but officials with CRANDIC and the Iowa DOT hope the intermodal facility is moving freight by early 2019.

While they have hailed the project, not all are happy about it.

David Rusch, for one, president and CEO of trucking company CRST International, said he's 'very upset with it' since the federal government appears to be subsidizing his competition.

He also questioned whether the intermodal facility would improve the efficiency of freight movement. Trucks, he argued, already can move those products.

'If you've got to build a \$50 million terminal to support the Iowa freight network, I would question whether there's a break-even on it,' he said.

Amy Homan, director of carload marketing for Iowa Northern Railway Co., said the company is in 'wait-and-see mode' on the intermodal facility.

'There's a lot of stuff leaving Iowa and not a lot coming in on the intermodal perspective,' Homan said. 'I don't think it's going to have a huge effect on our business.'

What about water and air?

While most of Iowa's freight moves by truck and rail, state officials also are worried about how Iowa ships products over water.

Barges are used to ship those products in bulk and help it get to other markets. The used to move those barges, though, is well past its prime.

'It's nearing a point with a lot of that where it's many, many years beyond its useful life. You start to run into concerns with reliability on the lock-and-dam system,' said Garrett Pedersen, planning team leader with the Iowa DOT.

Of the 11 locks in the Mississippi River that border Iowa, the state DOT identified all of them as potential bottlenecks for freight transportation.

Bottlenecks are points where freight shipments and vehicle movement may be delayed due to traffic congestion, a decline in speeds, flooding or a bridge needing to be raised.

For comparison, the department identified 94 bottlenecks along Iowa's 114,000 miles of roadways and 36 along the 3,800 miles of railway. There are 491 miles of navigable waterways in Iowa.

The lock-and-dam system can be a 'single-point of failure,' Pedersen said. If one location goes down, it affects all movement upstream and causes freight delays. More freight would have to move by land, shifting the burden to road and railways.

The only transportation mode with no bottlenecks: air.

Iowa's airfreight system, which includes Des Moines International Airport and The Eastern Iowa Airport in Cedar Rapids, have excess capacity. Air cargo shipments have declined in recent years as companies turn to trucks and rail.

While the lack of bottlenecks is a benefit, the decline in shipments has affected the local economy. UPS announced earlier this year it would move a second-day sorting facility from the Des Moines airport to Illinois. The company has a larger sorting facility in Rockford and it's closer to markets.

'We're sorry to lose it. I understand why we're losing it, and it will have an economic impact on the airport,' Airport Executive Director Kevin Foley said.

I Comments: (319) 398-8366; matthew.patane@thegazette.com

Graphic

Can Iowa keep up with what it needs to ship? Can Iowa keep up with what it needs to ship? Can Iowa keep up with what it needs to ship? Can Iowa keep up with what it needs to ship? Can Iowa keep up with what it needs to ship? Can Iowa keep up with what it needs to ship? Can Iowa keep up with what it needs to ship? Can Iowa keep up with what it needs to ship?

Load-Date: January 12, 2022

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On Topic: Wheels up

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, IA)

30 December 2021

Web Edition

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Section: NEWS

Length: 771 words

Byline: Michael Chevy Castranova

Body

I usually write these columns the weekend before they appear in print. I used to be a month or so ahead, but, you know, real life gets in the way.

This particular column was composed eight days ago, on Labor Day weekend. To be honest, I would rather have been out in the fresh air and sunshine riding my bike.

The week, work-wise, was anything but dull. You may have heard.

For one thing, The Gazette Company on Tuesday announced the planned sale of KCRG-TV9 and its online operation to Atlanta-based Gray Television Inc. for \$100 million in cash. Details of what happens next as this newspaper and our longtime TV comrades - allies? siblings? - decouple have been released daily, pretty much as they are figured out.

We're moving, KCRG-TV9 is not - they own all this fancy broadcast equipment, after all. Where are we going? Um, still working on that.

But it'll be fun, you'll see.

And then on the Thursday evening was the culmination of lots of heavy lifting - and even more discussion - for our first Business 380 Excellence Awards banquet.

If you were not there, you should have been. One of my pals at KCRG-TV9, Ashley Hinson, and I gave out awards to 18 different Corridor companies and not-for-profits in a slew of categories, from manufacturing to technology and corporate culture.

Some 260 attendees at the Hotel at Kirkwood also got to hear keynotes Debi Durham, Iowa Economic Development Authority director, and her counterpart at the Department of Transportation, Paul Trombino III, talk about the state of economic development in Iowa and what we need to accomplish to keep moving forward.

I might be the last person to be able to give unbiased testimony as to how the event was received, but people appeared to enjoy the evening - they networked and dined, business cards were exchanged and, hey, they laughed at my jokes. Well, at most of them.

A good time, it seems, was had by all.

Meanwhile that same week, the University of Iowa picked a new president, work on Highway 100 zoomed along at breakneck pace and Westdale developers revealed Chipotle early next year will join the expanding list of retailers signed up for that \$90 million redevelopment. Lots of news to cover.

So you'll understand why I'm sorely tempted to give my head a rest and not think about work for just a bit and instead take a spin on my bike.

Let me tell you about this bike: It is not new - not new in manufacture nor new to me. I came by it after its predecessor was destroyed beyond repair one late-summer afternoon due to a sudden and violent encounter between it and Ohio State University's famed Horseshoe stadium.

(Spokes popped off, the handlebar was wrenched skyward, the front wheel ended up parallel with the pedals, and I didn't fare so well myself.)

This current bicycle, an emerald-green Schwinn Classic, comes with a checkered career: I've owned it for longer than some of the people I work with here at The Gazette have been alive, and I bought it from a sax player back when I lived in Columbus.

And he got it from who knows what kind of shady character, but I do seem to recall maybe he mentioned that previous exchange had nothing to do with actual cash changing hands.

When I wheeled the Schwinn into the shop downtown last month to finally get the tires replaced - and have the front fork realigned, a longtime defect which I'd learned over the years to accommodate - all the repair guys stopped chatting over their coffee and stared. Eyebrows rose.

One of the guys dated my bike at 1962 or '63.

It is surprisingly heavy (I suspect it's made of dwarf star alloy), and it can't go terribly fast, at least until you're headed downhill. And the brakes, I'm told, are what are known as the roller-coaster type - no wimpy hand brakes, but the kind where you have to pedal backward really fast to slow down. When that doesn't work - which it doesn't always as quickly as I'd like - you try as best you can to slam your feet to the ground and dig in, Flintstones-style.

Sturdy shoes always a good idea.

When Gazette reporter B.A. Morelli, who has ridden and reported on RAGBRAI and knows far more about cycling than I do, saw a photo of the Schwinn, he noted the brakes and asked, 'Aren't those (thoughtful pause) dangerous?'

What can I say? Every ride is an adventure. I'd forgotten how much fun that is.

And probably because this bike requires me to pay attention, it takes my mind off work. Which is why Labor Day was invented, right?

OK, heading out now. See you on the streets.

' Michael Chevy Castranova is enterprise and Sunday business editor of The Gazette. (319) 398-5873; michaelchevy.castranova@thegazette.com

Graphic

On Topic: Wheels up On Topic: Wheels up

Load-Date: December 31, 2021

Year in review: Trump presidency felt in Iowa

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, IA)

29 December 2021

Web Edition

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Section: NEWS

Length: 252 words

Byline: Erin Jordan

Body

This storyline was voted as one of the top storylines of 2017 by Gazette staff. Other top storylines include the debate over legalized fireworks in Iowa, Gov. Kim Reynolds' first term in office, and developments in Iowa's managed care system.

Donald Trump's transition from New York businessman and reality TV star to president of the United States had cascading effects for Iowa in 2017.

Iowa Republicans who helped Trump claim his seat also wrested control of the Iowa Senate from Democrats, giving the GOP dominion over both houses of the Iowa Legislature and the governor's office. The Legislature quickly passed major changes to collective bargaining, took state money away from Planned Parenthood and expanded gun laws.

Trump nominated a handful of Iowans to prominent federal government posts - but with mixed results.

Then-Gov. Terry Branstad was tapped in December 2016 to be U.S. ambassador to China. He won easy U.S. Senate confirmation in May and, with his family, left for Beijing last summer.

Trump campaign aide Sam Clovis withdrew his nomination to become the U.S. Department of Agriculture's chief scientist in November after being linked with special prosecutor Robert Mueller's Russia probe, while former Iowa Department of Transportation Director **Paul Trombino** III took himself out of the running for administrator of the Federal Highway Administration in mid-December, citing family reasons.

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey's nomination to be an undersecretary in the USDA is on hold.

Graphic

Year in review: Trump presidency felt in Iowa

Load-Date: December 30, 2021

No 'slam dunk' for Iowa's hiring hurdles; Presenting the 2021 Gazette Business Award recipients

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, IA)

2 September 2021

Web Edition

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Section: BUSINESS

Length: 574 words

Byline: Michael Chevy Castranova

Body

Over the years, I've interviewed more economists than you probably can shake a Laffer curve at. But the economist I most wanted to chat with for our 2021 Gazette Business Awards keynote interview was Dr. Kathryn Anne Edwards.

Edwards, a labor economist with the Rand Corporation think tank, also is a professor at the Pardee Rand Graduate School. Her public-policy research has included unemployment insurance; the STEM education pipeline; women's workforce issues; challenges in retirement facing older Americans; and the labor market for workers without college degrees.

So she was the obvious choice with whom to check in during a year when we figured we'd be post-pandemic — though not quite just yet, it now seems — and given Iowa's continuing hiring and retention concerns.

One piece of "cold comfort" she offered during our discussion was that Iowa is not alone among states in its workforce challenges.

Edwards outlined two principal ways to gain more workers.

"Either you import more people through immigration," she said — "if your population grew, you'd have more people" working — or you must develop ways to get more of the current population working. Both these avenues can be expensive and require "investments" on the part of employers — day care options and accommodations at the workplace, for example — as well as policy changes at the state level.

She pointed out Iowa's labor participation rate dropped notably during the pandemic compared to the national average. So the workforce solution for us is "not a slam dunk," Edwards said.

It's also fitting to have Edwards take part in this year's Gazette Business Awards in that our very first awards event — in 2015, live and in person at the Hotel at Kirkwood Center in Cedar Rapids, you'll remember — featured as its keynotes Debi Durham, Iowa Economic Development Authority director, and then-Iowa Department of Transportation Director **Paul Trombino**.

They talked about — you guessed it — workforce issues and their effects on progress and the state's economy.

And speaking of awards, each of this year's recipients have been interviewed by Gazette reporters — Erin Jordan, Marissa Payne, Michaela Ramm and John Steppe — or me to talk about their achievements. Challenges they faced, decisions they made and lessons they learned and want to share.

This year's Gazette Business Award recipients, by category, are:

- * The Trailblazer: Kim Becicka, Kirkwood Community College
- * The Driver: Kate Moreland, Iowa City Area Development Group
- * Economic Development: BAE Systems
- * Collaboration: Iowa EdTech Collaborative
- * Commercial Real Estate: Xtreme Arena and GreenState Family Fieldhouse
- * Community Vision: Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation
- * Economic Support: NewBoCo
- * Infrastructure: ImOn Communications
- * Innovation: NewBo City Market
- * Rebuilding: Trees Forever and Monarch Research Project for the ReLeaf Cedar Rapids and Planting Forward projects
- * Restaurant: Vivian's Soul Food

You can watch our recorded interviews with this year's Gazette Business Award recipients — along with my full discussion with the Rand Corporation's Edwards — at thegazette.com/businessawards. Beginning Thursday, Sept. 9, we will upload to our site a pair of interviews each day.

You should watch.

Presenting sponsor for the 2021 Gazette Business Awards is TrueNorth Cos.

Michael Chevy Castranova is business editor of The Gazette; (319) 398-8307; michaelchevy.castranova@thegazette.com

Graphic

No 'slam dunk' for Iowa's hiring hurdles

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Autonomous vehicles are coming. Cities need to start planning. Now

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, IA)

18 August 2021

Web Edition

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Section: BUSINESS

Length: 1841 words

Body

The day autonomous vehicles outnumber manned vehicles is coming, and experts say transportation and urban planners, public policy makers and others must begin working on this reality to ensure decisions and investments of today align with needs of tomorrow.

Autonomous vehicles, it is believed, could travel closer together, faster and in a more confined space. Lanes could be smaller and fewer. On-street parking could be minimized.

Vehicles could park themselves outside urban areas, creating more room for commercial development, bike lanes and wider sidewalks, and green space for recreation, parks, and to help manage stormwater. Seniors and those with disabilities could more easily access doctors and recreation, and those now lacking reliable transportation could have more employment opportunities.

Add to this that American drivers spend 29.6 billion hours a year commuting - 24 miles each way, on average - according to the U.S. Census Bureau, meaning a greater potential for workforce productivity if people can work on the go. Driver shortages plaguing shipping companies could be decreased, and the vehicles could operate more cleanly, safely and efficiently.

These are common theories of scholars and industry experts in transportation planning papers and articles. To be sure, considerable challenges also exist.

No one knows for certain when this day of a driverless vehicle saturated society will arrive or for sure what it will look like. Some suggest it's just a matter of years, others say decades or more.

In 'full swing' by 2030?

Paul Trombino, a former nominee to lead the Federal Highway Administration who now heads Iowa-based McClure Engineering, was seen as a visionary in how to modernize the transportation system and plan for a future of autonomous vehicles as director of the Iowa Department of Transportation from 2011-16.

'Right now, the biggest question is what do they have the need for in the existing system and will they have the same need in the future,' **Trombino** said. 'My belief is no. They should already be starting to think about this. Are there elements to be building in now to change the system?'

The transition to autonomous vehicles already has begun, Trombino added. The American Planning Association reports the top 11 automakers each have plans to have a fully autonomous vehicle on the road by 2021. By the 2030s, Trombino anticipates, autonomous vehicles will have a measurable foothold on public roadways.

This is important because roads are designed to last 30 or 40 years, bridges 75 to 100 years, and urban planning decisions of today - such as redeveloping blighted areas such as the New Bohemia District in Cedar Rapids and the Riverfront Crossing district in Iowa City - could last generations.

Autonomous vehicles may seem more sci-fi than reality at this point, but several research papers support Trombino's timeline and urge decision-makers to take it seriously.

A 2017 paper - called "Taming the Autonomous Vehicle: A Primer for Cities" for Bloomberg Philanthropies and the Aspen Institute Center for Urban Innovation - projected by 2025 that 6 percent of vehicles worldwide will be fully automated and 36 percent will be partially automated. By 2030, the transition will be in "full swing," and by 2035, the number will grow to 38 percent fully autonomous and 39 percent partially autonomous, according to the report.

By 2040, experts with the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers predict 75 percent of vehicles will be autonomous, according to the report.

Others see a longer transition.

Jeff Speck, an urban planner, designer and author who advised Cedar Rapids as it rethought downtown to make it more walkable and bikeable, wrote last year "that major change is unlikely to happen for several decades ... (and) other experts think that full autonomy will not happen at all."

Dan McGehee, an associate professor and director of University of Iowa's National Advanced Driving Simulator, said it will be 20 years before 90 percent of the vehicle fleet using roadways include the latest driver-assisted technology in today's new vehicle models. Fully autonomous vehicles having a meaningful presence on the road is at least 50 years away, he predicts.

The National League of Cities put out a "policy preparation guide" for autonomous vehicles last year.

Recommendations include begin planning now; consider policy development that could anticipate issues such as procurement and public safety; have a voice in developments at the state and federal level; and begin planning infrastructure needs and building data and computing capacity to position your city to take advantage of an automated mobility future.

Questions

Some public-sector planners and traffic engineers describe this as an exciting time, but also a time in which a lot of questions exist - and not many answers.

Will autonomous vehicles create more or less congestion? Will autonomous vehicles be a shared fleet or will people still largely own their own vehicles? Will public transit remain viable or needed?

How much data storage and broadband capacity will be needed and who will support it? How will autonomous vehicles affect revenue streams, such as parking and speeding tickets?

In Cedar Rapids, which is rebuilding its roads and has discussed a new downtown Five Seasons parking ramp, the autonomous vehicle future is on the radar but not a factor when designing the projects of today.

"Right now, when we are designing a road, we still have to design it to all of the current standards," said John Witt, a Cedar Rapids transportation engineer. But, he added, "It's coming. Someday down the road, every car could be an autonomous vehicle. But I don't think it will happen in our lifetime."

Regardless, Witt said, autonomous vehicles will need to function on roads of today and coexist with the non-autonomous fleet. The transition period to a more autonomous fleet will last a long time, he said.

For now, the focus is on traffic flow, ensuring accessibility for multiple modes of transportation, and making lane markings and signs discernible for both drivers and automated vehicles, which use markings and signs for lane awareness and speed control, he said. 'Automated' refers to vehicles with some form of automation as opposed to driverless.

Wider shoulders

Donna Matulac is the automated vehicle technologies project manager at the Iowa DOT. A big focus is collecting accurate data, she said. One project examines how automated vehicles can navigate construction zones and developing national standards for data to support this, she said.

An Iowa DOT Interstate 380 study this year identified pavement designed with automated vehicles in mind, continuous fiber optics and other infrastructure upgrades such as readable signs, cameras and sensors to feed into automated vehicle programs. Thicker, wider shoulders built today potentially could be autonomous-vehicle-only lanes in the future, Matulac said.

A new initiative called the Iowa Advisory Council on Automated Transportation unites key players from state and local government, private sector, insurance and research to examine 'where from the state of Iowa perspective should we be going,' Matulac said. The group is setting up subcommittees to focus on infrastructure, communications, economic development and safety, she said.

While Iowa has embraced automated vehicles on some fronts, it is among 34 states barring autonomous truck platoons.

Eastern Iowa has become a forerunner in the autonomous vehicle movement. The U.S. Department of Transportation last year named the Iowa City-Cedar Rapids corridor and the University of Iowa's National Advanced Driving Simulator as one of 10 designated automated vehicle proving grounds in the nation.

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The project is designed to 'help Iowa City prepare for the anticipated impacts of automated vehicles on the built environment and community' as well as increased prevalence of ride hailing.

The proposal calls to develop policy guidance for how ride-sharing and autonomous vehicles could fill gaps in the public transportation system and expand access to jobs and health care; a parking and complete streets plan with ride-sharing drop-off areas and reallocation of downtown parking and road space; and implications and integration of exclusive pedestrian and low-speed automated vehicle zones and how that impacts urban land use.

The project proposal requests recommendations for the next five to 10 years and the next 10 to 20 years.

'We are looking at hot spots, looking at areas humans might want automated vehicles - areas that are dense, downtown or employment bases,' said Ashley McDonald, project manager for the Driving Simulator and a project mentor.

Darian Nagle-Gamm, Iowa City transportation director and a project lead for the city, said she hopes the project addresses how autonomous vehicle adaptation could be unique in Iowa City.

For example, a third of the traveling public move by bike, walking or public transit there, and the city wants to maintain that culture, she said.

'The picture is fuzzy right now, but we don't want to be caught in 20 years having not considered the impacts and be in a situation where you are backpedaling," she said.

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Recommendations for planners

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Source: National League of Cities

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LEVEL 01

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An automated system that can assist parts of the driving task, such as controlling speed, braking or steering, for part of the time.

LEVEL 02

Function-Specific Full Automation

This enables a part of the driving to be entirely automated, with the human playing an active monitoring role, such as automatic parking.

LEVEL 03

Function-Specific Full Awareness Automation

There is awareness of the environment around the vehicle, and can fully automate and monitor some parts of driving. The human driver must be ready to take back control but is not actively monitoring every aspect of the driving.

LEVEL 04

Environment-Specific Full Automation

The driver no longer is expected to constantly monitor driving or the driving environment, but the automated system can only operate in certain environments and under certain conditions, such as highway-only automation.

LEVEL 05

Full Automation

The automated system can perform all driving and monitoring functions in all environments.

Source: National League of Cities

Graphic

Autonomous vehicles are coming. Cities need to start planning. Now

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Can Iowa keep up with what it needs to ship?

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, IA)

11 January 2022

Web Edition

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Body

They are common sights for Iowans. Trucks driving down the highway, two or three at a time, pulling grain, chemicals, the occasional blade for a wind turbine. Railcars passing through town on their way to chemical or cereal-making plants.

If agriculture and manufacturing are the historic drivers of Iowa's economy, the state's freight network—a mix of roads, highways, rail, airports, pipelines and waterways—is certainly its backbone.

It's that network that moves more than \$260 billion in products a year—corn and soybeans from Iowa fields to ethanol plants or overseas consumers, steel to machinery makers such as Kinze Manufacturing in Williamsburg, Canadian lumber to Suburban Lumber Co. in Cedar Rapids, and everyday products to households in Iowa and elsewhere.

Iowa, the producer state

'We're a producer state, which means the vast majority of what we make, we do not consume. We actually move it in the state, we move it to other states, and we move a lot of it out of the country,' said Paul Trombino, president of McClure Engineering Co. and former director of the Iowa Department of Transportation.

What Iowa ships, where it goes and how it moves won't change drastically, according to a state freight plan the Iowa DOT released last year. How much Iowa ships, though, is expected to grow greatly.

While that's good for Iowa's economy, it also means the state's freight network needs to stay in good enough shape to handle the growth.

'Agriculture and manufacturing, those two things require shipments of goods. Without a network that can tap into the national network, that keeps Iowa from being competitive,' said Amy Homan, director of carload marketing for Iowa Northern Railway Co.

Iowa's freight shipments are expected to grow more than 30 percent by 2040, to just under 600 million tons annually. And that doesn't take into account the freight that moves through Iowa but isn't produced here.

As shipments grow, so will strain on the state's freight system and the need for Iowa to maintain its infrastructure or find more efficient methods to move those products, experts and industry professionals said.

For example, the amount of freight moved by truck the dominant transportation method in Iowa is estimated to increase by more than 32 percent by 2040, causing more congestion and pavement deterioration, the DOT noted in its 2016 report.

State and federal regulation, technology changes and trouble filling jobs also can put pressure on the freight network and the companies that use it.

CRST International President David Rusch said the trucking company has not grown organically in recent years because it can't find enough drivers.

'At the end of the day, in the last four years, five years, CRST's operating companies have not grown. We have grown as a company from acquiring other companies,' Rusch said.

Better funding, better connections

Iowa's DOT has released multiple studies on how freight moves in an attempt to identify bottlenecks and potential optimization areas.

The state received a \$26.5 million grant in 2016 to build a logistics park and intermodal hub in Cedar Rapids.

Two years ago, state lawmakers approved a 10-cent gas tax increase, which puts \$200 million more per year into Iowa's road fund.

But even with these steps, state officials and industry watchers said funding and infrastructure upkeep will remain a concern.

The state already ranks among the worst in the nation for the condition of its roads and bridges, according to several reports.

'With transportation needs outpacing revenues, Iowa's multimodal freight system will be subject to more widespread deterioration, which may eventually lead to loss of access to needed services and goods,' the DOT noted in its 2016 plan.

Connecting different parts of the freight network, such as through the intermodal facility, also is necessary.

'The more efficient we make the movement for a product to move from one mode to another, the more efficient and effective we are in a competitive marketplace,' Trombino said.

Some specific spots or corridors will need more attention than others, such as Interstate 80 from Iowa City to the Mississippi River, said Garrett Pedersen, planning team leader with the Iowa DOT.

'Certainly that stretch of Iowa can't handle that type of growth in truck traffic,' Pedersen said. 'Spot locations certainly are going to need some attention to deal with that growth in freight traffic.'

Damaged infrastructure and a lack of connection points for freight transfers can increase transportation costs.

'The maintenance costs on our equipment when you're running a bad road system, or rough system, obviously is elevated because of the springs, the shocks, the beating that the tractor takes running up and down the road,' CRST's Rusch noted.

The more those expenditures go up, the more an Iowa-made product or commodity can cost, potentially pricing it out of the market. That's because transportation costs make up between 20 percent to 25 percent of final product cost, explained Craig Markley, director of Iowa DOT's office of systems planning.

'It's a big deal because if you can save on the freight, that can give you more of a competitive edge,' said Jamie O'Connell, operations manager for Suburban Lumber Co.

'What's inside the box'

In addition to funding, another solution lies with data collection.

If Iowa can better identify how freight moves and what's moving, it may not need to spend as much money on infrastructure, Trombino and others argued.

'Traditionally in transportation it's count the number of boxes in the system. What's more important is what's inside the box,' Trombino said.

For example, refrigerated trucks carrying frozen food have different needs than trucks with more durable freight.

Data can include highly detailed maps that show road conditions, traffic congestion and weather patterns in real-time.

'Once you start doing that, freight companies want to start operating here. They know that once they get here, they're going to be able to just glide through here,' said Dan McGehee, director of the National Advanced Driving Simulator at the University of Iowa.

Better data, Trombino said, can help the state make better decisions about what to improve. A crucial roadway 100 years ago may not serve the same need today.

'Being on a farm-to-market road 100 years, you didn't survive as a farmer if you didn't have good connectivity on a farm-to-market system. That market was maybe 60 or 100 miles away. Today, it can be an ocean away,' he said.

That same information, Trombino and McGehee said, also will be needed as more autonomous driving technology comes online.

'Without the map and the data, you don't have driverless vehicles, you don't have fluid freight movement,' Trombino said.

Cedar Rapids' new freight hub

\$47 million facility will shift, store loads

State officials announced last year Cedar Rapids would be home to a new intermodal facility essentially a hub to transfer freight from one transportation method to another.

The project is expected to cost about \$47 million, with \$26.5 million of that covered by federal funding.

The remainder will come from private companies, including Alliant Energy, which has taken the lead on the intermodal facility.

The hub will tap into the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railway, or CRANDIC, which is a subsidiary of Alliant. Once complete, it's expected to have three main components facilities to transfer freight from truck to rail and vice versa; a cross-dock area to transfer from truck to truck and consolidate shipments; and a bulk freight storage area.

The facility, officials said, will help make freight movement in Iowa more efficient and help cut down on shipments that have to go to larger facilities in Chicago, Kansas City and other cities

Council Bluffs has the only other similar facility in Iowa.

'If you were just looking across the land to say, 'What's the best place in the Midwest to build large logistics and intermodal connectivity between all modes of freight,' you would not put it in the middle of 10 million people in Chicago,' said Paul Trombino, president of McClure Engineering Co. in Clive and the former director of the Iowa Department of Transportation.

He likened the hub to an 'inland port.'

Cedar Rapids was the perfect spot for the hub, DOT and CRANDIC officials said, because of the amount of freight moved within and near the city.

'There's a lot that goes on from a freight perspective within an hour-and-a-half of Cedar Rapids,' said Jeff Woods, manager of marketing and business development for CRANDIC.

CRANDIC has selected a 75-acre site just south Highway 30 and Edgewood Road SW.

Construction may not begin until early 2018, but officials with CRANDIC and the Iowa DOT hope the intermodal facility is moving freight by early 2019.

While they have hailed the project, not all are happy about it.

David Rusch, for one, president and CEO of trucking company CRST International, said he's 'very upset with it' since the federal government appears to be subsidizing his competition.

He also questioned whether the intermodal facility would improve the efficiency of freight movement. Trucks, he argued, already can move those products.

'If you've got to build a \$50 million terminal to support the Iowa freight network, I would question whether there's a break-even on it,' he said.

Amy Homan, director of carload marketing for Iowa Northern Railway Co., said the company is in 'wait-and-see mode' on the intermodal facility.

'There's a lot of stuff leaving Iowa and not a lot coming in on the intermodal perspective,' Homan said. 'I don't think it's going to have a huge effect on our business.'

What about water and air?

While most of Iowa's freight moves by truck and rail, state officials also are worried about how Iowa ships products over water.

Barges are used to ship those products in bulk and help it get to other markets. The used to move those barges, though, is well past its prime.

'It's nearing a point with a lot of that where it's many, many years beyond its useful life. You start to run into concerns with reliability on the lock-and-dam system,' said Garrett Pedersen, planning team leader with the Iowa DOT.

Of the 11 locks in the Mississippi River that border Iowa, the state DOT identified all of them as potential bottlenecks for freight transportation.

Bottlenecks are points where freight shipments and vehicle movement may be delayed due to traffic congestion, a decline in speeds, flooding or a bridge needing to be raised.

For comparison, the department identified 94 bottlenecks along Iowa's 114,000 miles of roadways and 36 along the 3,800 miles of railway. There are 491 miles of navigable waterways in Iowa.

The lock-and-dam system can be a 'single-point of failure,' Pedersen said. If one location goes down, it affects all movement upstream and causes freight delays. More freight would have to move by land, shifting the burden to road and railways.

The only transportation mode with no bottlenecks: air.

Iowa's airfreight system, which includes Des Moines International Airport and The Eastern Iowa Airport in Cedar Rapids, have excess capacity. Air cargo shipments have declined in recent years as companies turn to trucks and rail.

While the lack of bottlenecks is a benefit, the decline in shipments has affected the local economy. UPS announced earlier this year it would move a second-day sorting facility from the Des Moines airport to Illinois. The company has a larger sorting facility in Rockford and it's closer to markets.

'We're sorry to lose it. I understand why we're losing it, and it will have an economic impact on the airport,' Airport Executive Director Kevin Foley said.

I Comments: (319) 398-8366; matthew.patane@thegazette.com

Graphic

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In 'full swing' by 2030?

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LEVEL 03

Function-Specific Full Awareness Automation

There is awareness of the environment around the vehicle, and can fully automate and monitor some parts of driving. The human driver must be ready to take back control but is not actively monitoring every aspect of the driving.

LEVEL 04

Environment-Specific Full Automation

The driver no longer is expected to constantly monitor driving or the driving environment, but the automated system can only operate in certain environments and under certain conditions, such as highway-only automation.

LEVEL 05

Full Automation

The automated system can perform all driving and monitoring functions in all environments.

Source: National League of Cities

Graphic

Autonomous vehicles are coming. Cities need to start planning. Now

Load-Date: August 19, 2021

End of Document

City of New Orleans and State of Iowa to improve emergency communications

Impact Financial News

May 20, 2021 Thursday

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Length: 378 words

Body

FRAMINGHAM:Rave Mobile Safety (Rave) announcesthe City of New Orleans and the State of Iowa have adopted Rave Alert to replace legacy emergency mass notification systems, and are among 260 new deployments in the first months of 2021.New Orleans will use the Rave platform to power its “NOLA Ready” alerting system. This deployment will allow residents to simultaneously sign up for NOLA Ready alerts, subscribe to alerts from the Governor’s Office, Louisiana Department of Health and other State agencies and create a Smart911 Safety Profile. These profiles provide 9-1-1 operators and first responders with instant critical information used to inform emergency response.

“In New Orleans, we’ve faced many challenges over the last few years,” said Collin Arnold, Director of the New Orleans Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (NOHSEP). “With each storm, every special event and over the course of the pandemic, we’ve seen the importance of providing safety information directly to residents as soon as possible. Upgrading and enhancing NOLA Ready with Rave Alert will give our responders ease of use and give our residents the information they need when it matters most. ”

In Iowa, officials will use Rave Alert to communicate with residents about extreme weather, civil unrest, public health and safety concerns, bulletins for dangerous situations and safety notifications for county fairs or festivals. Iowa will also use the Rave platform for communication between state and county offices. Rave Alert replaces the current system and will allow for customization, such as multilingual translations or population segmentation. “Between the pandemic, extreme weather and local events, it became clear we needed a streamlined and customizable way to share updates with residents across the State of Iowa at a moment’s notice,” said Paul Trombino, Director of the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. “From ensuring every resident in a state can receive urgent and targeted critical communications, to improving the quality of data local agencies rely on for greater situational awareness and better response, our clients are leveraging our technology to create truly collaborative safety ecosystems,” said Todd Piatt, Rave CEO.

Load-Date: May 21, 2021

City of New Orleans and State of Iowa Join Growing Trend to Improve Emergency Communications by Deploying Rave Alert; Rave Mobile Safety Supports State and City Officials Through New Deployments, Marcus Alert System Compliance and a First-of-its-Kind Data Partnership

Business Wire

May 19, 2021 Wednesday 12:30 PM GMT

Copyright 2021 Business Wire, Inc.

Length: 1103 words

Dateline: FRAMINGHAM, Mass.

Body

Rave Mobile Safety (Rave), the critical communication and collaboration platform customers count on when it matters most, announced that the City of New Orleans and the State of Iowa have adopted Rave Alert to replace legacy emergency mass notification systems, and are among 260 new deployments in the first months of 2021.

Rave Enhances Mass Notifications for City of New Orleans and State of Iowa

New Orleans will use the Rave platform to power its "NOLA Ready" alerting system. This deployment will allow residents to simultaneously sign up for NOLA Ready alerts, subscribe to alerts from the Governor's Office, Louisiana Department of Health and other State agencies and create a Smart911 Safety Profile. These profiles provide 9-1-1 operators and first responders with instant critical information used to inform emergency response.

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"Between the pandemic, extreme weather and local events, it became clear we needed a streamlined and customizable way to share updates with residents across the State of Iowa at a moment's notice," said Paul Trombino, Director of the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. "Our statewide deployment of Rave Alert allows State and county officials to quickly notify the community and confidently deliver the right message to the right people when it matters most."

In both New Orleans and Iowa, subscribers can set notification preferences for where they receive alerts (SMS text, push notification, email or voice message) and for the type of alert, ranging from emergency alerts, COVID-19 updates and special event and traffic updates.

Rave Alert fosters greater interactivity between officials and alert recipients, improving both disaster preparedness and emergency response. It is easy to deploy, customizable and includes features like multilingual translations, polling, geo-targeted alerts and two-way messaging. From everyday usage to a catastrophic event, state and local agencies can get urgent updates to their communities quickly when seconds count. The solution is FedRAMP authorized, providing further evidence of Rave's public safety-grade infrastructure and adherence to stringent security standards, including a commitment to 99.999% availability.

These deployments of the Rave platform are the latest examples of Rave's growing collaborative safety ecosystem. The company further expanded that ecosystem in the past quarter through new partnerships and support of statewide safety legislation alike.

Rave Supports Compliance to Virginia's Marcus Alert Act

Rave also worked with communities across the Commonwealth of Virginia to support their compliance with Virginia's Marcus Alert System , which established a statewide mental health awareness response and community understanding services.

The Marcus Alert legislation requires every locality in Virginia to establish a voluntary database available to the 9-1-1 alert system and the Marcus alert system to provide mental health information and emergency contact information for response to an emergency or crisis by July 1, 2021. Smart911 , Rave's national service that allows individuals to provide 9-1-1 call takers and first responders with critical information through a Safety and Vulnerable Needs Profile, addresses the legislation's requirement.

"From ensuring every resident in a state can receive urgent and targeted critical communications, to improving the quality of data local agencies rely on for greater situational awareness and better response, our clients are leveraging our technology to create truly collaborative safety ecosystems," said Todd Piatt, Rave CEO. "We are excited to play a role in improving safety by working closely with those tasked with protecting our communities on their most pressing safety and critical communication challenges."

Rave Establishes First-in-the-Nation Partnership for Fully Validated 9-1-1 Location Data

To improve the quality of data public safety agencies rely on to accurately target critical mass notification recipients, Rave has also partnered with GeoComm , a leading provider of Public Safety Location Intelligence®. This partnership will bring to market a first-in-the-nation seamless integration of authoritative and fully validated 9-1-1 location data into Rave Alert. Rave and GeoComm expect general availability of their integrated solution this summer.

Thousands of communities and organizations in the U.S. and abroad count on Rave's solutions to protect their populations and coordinate safety responses. To learn more about Rave Mobile Safety, visit www.ravemobilesafety.com .

About Rave Mobile Safety

Rave Mobile Safety is the leading provider of critical communication and collaboration technology used to save lives, manage crisis incidents and increase resiliency. From major disasters and crisis events to everyday emergencies and operational incidents, the Rave platform enables critical data sharing, mass notification and emergency response coordination. Over 8,000 first responder, emergency management, 9-1-1, and federal, state and local agencies-as well as corporations, healthcare organizations, universities and schools-all rely on Rave to prepare better, respond faster, recover quicker and mitigate anticipated critical incidents. Founded in 2004, Rave's award-winning software solutions are backed by leading growth equity firm TCV. Let Rave enable you to do all you can today™ to keep everyone safe. For more information, visit <https://www.ravemobilesafety.com> , read our company blog, and follow us on LinkedIn , Twitter , and Facebook .

View source version on businesswire.com: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20210519005504/en/>

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<http://www.businesswire.com>

Load-Date: May 19, 2021

End of Document

Reynolds announces high-level staffing changes, including COO

Des Moines Register (Iowa)

January 16, 2021 Saturday

1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. C3

Length: 261 words

Byline: By, Ian Richardson, Des Moines Register

Body

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds announced a pair of upper-level staffing changes on Thursday, including the hiring of a new chief operating officer.

Taryn Frideres, a native of Denison, Iowa, will move into the role after spending more than a decade as a senior policy adviser, most recently as deputy to the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. "She has proven herself in challenging roles across the federal government, and her experience will make her a great asset in service to the people of Iowa as my chief operating officer," Reynolds said in a statement.

Frideres' hiring will be accompanied by a move for Paul Trombino, who was serving as Iowa's chief operating officer and as the state's interim director of Iowa's Department of Administrative Services. Effective Jan. 22, Trombino will become the new head of Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management. He will succeed outgoing homeland security director Joyce Flinn, who is retiring Jan. 29. "Since devastating floods struck in 2019 and the global pandemic the year after, Paul has worked around the clock to coordinate Iowa's response," Reynolds said. "I appreciate his outside-the-box thinking and willingness to challenge the status quo to improve efficiency and functionality in state government. He will do an exceptional job leading this critical state agency."

Reynolds filled the Department of Administrative Services role on Monday, naming businessman Adam Steen to head the department.

Ian Richardson covers the Iowa Statehouse for the Des Moines Register. Reach him at irichardson@registermedia.com

Load-Date: January 16, 2021

End of Document

Iowa Gov. Reynolds Names New Chief Operating Officer, Trombino Appointed to HSEMD

Targeted News Service

January 15, 2021 Friday 8:50 AM EST

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Length: 354 words

Byline: Targeted News Service

Dateline: DES MOINES, Iowa

Body

Gov. Kim Reynolds, R-Iowa, issued the following news release:

Gov. Reynolds announced the hiring of Taryn Frideres to serve as her new Chief Operating Officer. Taryn is an Iowa native who is joining the Governor's team from the United States Department of State.

"I am excited to welcome Taryn back to Iowa. She has proven herself in challenging roles across the federal government, and her experience will make her a great asset in service to the people of Iowa as my Chief Operating Officer. Taxpayers deserve streamlined government services, and Taryn will play a central role in continuing my effort to improve our state's responsiveness and efficiency."

Gov. Reynolds also announced the appointment of Paul Trombino as Director of the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. Paul was serving as interim director of the Department of Administrative Services as well as the Governor's Chief Operating Officer. His appointment is effective January 22, 2021.

"Since devastating floods struck in 2019 and the global pandemic the year after, Paul has worked around the clock to coordinate Iowa's response," said Gov. Reynolds. "I appreciate his outside-the-box thinking and willingness to challenge the status quo to improve efficiency and functionality in state government. He will do an exceptional job leading this critical state agency."

Taryn Frideres has served as a trusted senior policy advisor for more than a decade as a private sector lawyer, Senate staffer, and U.S. State Department official. Since October 2019, Taryn has served as Deputy to the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, leading the Ambassador's Washington DC office and serving as a liaison to the White House, State Department, and Congress. Prior to her current role, Taryn served as Senior Advisor to the Deputy Secretary of State and Special Advisor to the Director of the Office of Policy Planning. A Denison, Iowa native, Taryn is a summa cum laude graduate of Drake University and holds a law degree, with high distinction, from the University of Iowa College of Law.

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Load-Date: January 15, 2021

Gov. Reynolds names new chief operating officer, moves Paul Trombino to Homeland Security; Taryn Frideres has been a lobbyist and attorney working in the U.S. State Department

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, IA)

14 January 2021

Web Edition

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Section: NEWS

Length: 198 words

Byline: Erin Jordan

Body

Gov. Kim Reynolds on Thursday named Paul Trombino as director of the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

Trombino, who had been Reynolds' chief operating officer since 2019, will be succeeded in that role by Taryn Frideres, a lobbyist and lawyer who had been working in the U.S. State Department's Office of Planning since 2017, Reynolds announced.

A Denison native, Frideres received a bachelor's degree from Drake University and a law degree from the University of Iowa College of Law, Reynolds said.

"I am excited to welcome Taryn back to Iowa," Reynolds said in a prepared statement. "She has proven herself in challenging roles across the federal government, and her experience will make her a great asset in service to the people of Iowa as my Chief Operating Officer."

Trombino, who served as Iowa Department of Transportation director from 2011 to 2016, has worn many hats in the Reynolds administration. Since May, he was both COO and interim director of the Iowa Department of Administrative Services, the state's human resources agency. On Tuesday, Reynolds appointed Adam Steen to lead that department.

Comments: (319) 339-3157; erin.jordan@thegazette.com

Graphic

Paul Trombino gives his keynote address on March 11, 2015, during the annual Marion Economic Development Corp. Business Lunch at the Cedar Rapids Marriott in Cedar Rapids. At the time, he led the Iowa Department of

Transportation. On Thursday, he was named director of the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. (The Gazette)

Load-Date: January 15, 2021

End of Document

A roundup of Capitol and state government news items of interest from Tuesday, January 12

Denison Bulletin & Review (Iowa)

January 13, 2021

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Section: GOVT AND POLITICS

Length: 930 words

Byline: Gazette Des Moines Bureau

Body

NEW IOWA DAS DIRECTOR: Gov. Kim Reynolds on Tuesday announced the appointment of Adam Steen of Pleasant Hill to serve as director of the state Department of Administrative Services.

A businessman, community volunteer and "lifelong learner," Steen serves as the director of business development at Syverson Strege, a financial planning services company.

Steen will take over the DAS duties from Paul Trombino III, the state's chief financial officer who has served in an acting capacity since Jim Kurtenbach resigned effective last March.

Steen's appointment was effective Monday subject to confirmation by the Iowa Senate.

"Adam has an impressive background in finance management, consulting, and making a career out of growing jobs and investing in small businesses across Iowa. I appreciate his business-minded focus and believe it will be a great fit at the state of Iowa's human resources agency," Reynolds said.

Officials in the governor's office did not immediately indicate what Steen's annual salary would be.

NO MASK MANDATE: Iowa House Republicans defeated Democratic attempt to amend rule to require face coverings for anyone participating in committee meetings in person. There is no mask mandate at the Capitol, including in the legislative chambers. On Tuesday, Democrats sought to amend committee rules to require face coverings. However, they amendments were voted down. It appeared the votes were along party lines, but because of the poor audio quality of the virtual meetings platform some lawmakers could not be heard. Minutes of those meetings have not yet been published.

House Speaker Pat Grassley's spokesperson said Grassley "has been clear in his comments to the press and to his caucus that he strongly encourages everyone to wear a mask when they are unable to practice social distancing."

CHILD CARE: A handful of bills addressing child care issues have been revived in the House.

Rep. Jacob Bossman, R-Sioux City, reintroduced HF 1, a bill the House approved in 2019 to expand the child care tax credit.

He also introduced HF 2, public-private partnerships and 4 to create an employer's child care tax credit, child care facility developer tax credit and an expansion of the High Quality Job program to include child care.

Rep. Ann Meyer, R-Fort Dodge, introduced HF 6 to create a child care workforce state matching grant program to match state grants to eligible communities. Legislative leaders have identified child care as a priority issue for the current session.

UI LAWSUIT SETTLED: Iowa's Appeal Board on Tuesday agreed the state should pay a former University of Iowa employee \$175,000 to settle a lawsuit in which he accuses his former employer of disability discrimination.

According to the agreement, which the board approved 3-0, the state will pay Joshua Garringer \$61,602.43 for non-wage compensation losses and \$41,068.28 for lost wages, plus \$72,329.29 for attorney fees.

Garringer, according to his lawsuit, started working at UI in 2002 as an animal caretaker in the research laboratories. In late 2017, he was diagnosed with a musculoskeletal impairment that causes bones to rub against each other and cause severe pain.

As a result, Garringer's physician imposed permanent work restrictions, limiting him from lifting, reaching and bending. In February 2018, Garringer told UI human resources of his new restrictions and need for accommodations.

In his lawsuit, Garringer said UI never evaluated potential accommodations that could have allowed him to continue as an animal caretaker and instead put him in an "ADA referral program" starting a 90-day clock to find another UI position.

A UI human resources officer — who is no longer with the institution — told Garringer to review available positions and let him know which he was interested in. Garringer did that, but the officer never responded, Garringer said.

In June 2018, he was notified he was being terminated "since he had not obtained a new position."

In his lawsuit, Garringer accused the university of violating Iowa's Civil Rights Act by, among other things, failing to accommodate his disability, failing to engage in an interactive process, and failing to try to find him another position.

SENATE SPECIAL ELECTION: Democrat Mary Stewart and Republican Adrian Dickey will square off in a Jan. 26 special election to fill the Iowa Senate District 41 seat vacated by freshmen Republican U.S. Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks.

Miller-Meeks, of Ottumwa, resigned her Iowa Senate seat before being provisionally sworn in with the new 117th Congress on Jan. 3 to represent southeast Iowa's 2nd Congressional District.

Miller-Meeks defeated Democrat Rita Hart by just six votes out of more than 400,000 cast in the November election following a districtwide recount in all 24 counties. Hart has filed a petition with the U.S. House challenging the results that is under review by the House Administration Committee.

Stewart and Dickey won their party's respective nomination for the seat through nominating conventions held last week, though candidates had until Tuesday to file nomination papers with the Iowa Secretary of State's Office.

The district includes most of Wapello and Jefferson counties and all of Davis and Van Buren counties.

A retired educator from Ottumwa, Stewart previously ran for the seat, losing to Miller-Meeks in 2018. Dickey, a Packwood businessman and manager of Dickey Transport, prevailed over former state Sen. Mark Chelgren for the Republican nomination. Chelgren represented the district in the Iowa Senate for two terms before retiring in 2018.

Load-Date: January 14, 2021

Iowa Capitol Digest

The Dispatch-Argus (Moline, IL)

January 12, 2021 Tuesday

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Section: GOVT AND POLITICS

Length: 1126 words

Byline: Gazette Des Moines Bureau

Body

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TWO PLEAD GUILTY TO GINSENG CHARGE: Officials with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources reported Tuesday that two northeast Iowa men pleaded guilty to illegal taking of wild ginseng on state-managed land after they were encountered by a state conservation officer last September.

The action stemmed from a situation where DNR Conservation Officer Dakota Drish encountered Gregg Latham, 58, of Oelwein, who was in his vehicle and serving as the driver and lookout for Dustin Millard, 49, of Strawberry Point, who was in the nearby timber, illegally scratching and digging wild ginseng roots, according to the department.

Circumstances led DNR officers to search Millard's and Latham's residences and issue multiple charges.

According to the DNR, Millard and Latham each pleaded guilty to 24 ginseng violations (\$5,046), one theft violation (\$237), one first-offense trespass violation (\$354) and one littering violation (\$106.75), totaling \$5,743.75 in criminal penalties. The court also found the men liable for reimbursing the state \$257.81 each for their portion of the stolen wild ginseng.

Load-Date: January 13, 2021

End of Document

Illinois over 1 million positive cases, will vaccinate 65-older in next phase

The Daily Nonpareil (Council Bluffs, Iowa)

January 9, 2021 Saturday

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Section: LOCAL

Length: 2976 words

Byline: Compiled by JIM MEENAN jmeenan@qconline.com

Body

Illinois surpassed 1,000,000 cases, and vaccination efforts continued to be slowed by lack of supply in the Quad-Cities. Still, Illinois announced it will allow those 65 and older to be vaccinated when it starts Stage 1B.

Friday, Jan. 1

With the help of his unspent lunch money, a Bettendorf student worked with his family to feed hungry people. Craig Bloomingdale, 8, who attends Mark Twain Elementary, and his parents, Ellen and Brent, used money from the account, along with more of their money and donations from others to collect three boxes of food that they then gave to the pantry at their church, All Saints Lutheran Church, in Davenport. The food included a box of cereal, peanut butter, stuffing mix, boxed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, canned fruit, canned tomatoes and other staples that covered the basics for making meals — proteins, carbohydrates, and fruits and vegetables. The Quad-Cities saw more than 100 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 on Friday but no new reported deaths to mark the start of the New Year. COVID-19 is the disease caused by the coronavirus. Scott County reported 115 new cases and no new deaths from COVID-19 or complications from the virus on New Year's Day, according to the Iowa coronavirus website, for a total of 14,190 positive cases since the pandemic began.

The COVID-19 death toll in Scott County stood at 152 deaths since the start of the pandemic. Updated numbers for Rock Island County were not available Friday. The county was reporting 256 COVID-19-related deaths and 78 new positive cases for a total of 10,846 as of Thursday. Iowa recorded an additional 2,007 cases, for a total of 282,664, and seven more COVID-19-related deaths, with 3,898 total deaths.

Saturday, Jan. 2

Thanks to the government paying nearly 40% of their income, U.S. farmers are expected to end 2020 with higher profits than 2019 and the best net income in seven years, the Department of Agriculture said in its latest farm income forecast. Farmers faced challenges throughout 2020 that included the impact of trade disputes; low prices that drove down cash receipts for corn, cotton, wheat, chicken, cattle and hogs; and weather difficulties such as drought in some areas and an unusual August wind storm stretching from South Dakota to Ohio that centered on Iowa. A federal judge has rejected an argument by Tyson Foods that it is not liable in the death of a worker in Iowa because it was following federal guidance when it kept meatpacking plants open during the coronavirus pandemic. Tyson was sued in August by the family of Isidro Fernandez, who worked at the company's plant in Waterloo, after he died April 26 from complications of COVID-19. More than 1,000 Tyson workers tested positive for the virus in May and at least six died.

The families of Fernandez and at least three other employees who died claim in lawsuits that the company was negligent in how it reacted to the pandemic.

Sunday, Jan. 3

The Rock Island County Health Department on Sunday reported one COVID-19-related death and 19 new cases. Since the pandemic was announced there have been 258 COVID-19-related deaths and 10,966 cases of COVID-19 in the county, officials said. The Rock Island County Health Department on Saturday reported a total of 101 new COVID-19 cases and one COVID-19-related death. The death was a man in his 90s who had been living in a long-term care facility. The total number of deaths in Rock Island County stands at 257 since the pandemic began. The new cases, 42 on Friday and 59 on Saturday, bring the total number of COVID-19 cases in Rock Island County to 10,947 since the pandemic was announced. There are 50 COVID-19 patients hospitalized in the county.

Monday Jan. 4

The Tyson meatpacking plant in Waterloo is known for hiring workers with criminal convictions. But limited job prospects and poor plant conditions leave these workers feeling stuck and undervalued, they told the Waterloo Courier. Yet some who were released from prison and escaped the spread of COVID-19 there, have greater fears working at Tyson before COVID-19 cases peaked, eventually leading more than 1,000 workers to become infected with the virus. Quad-Cities health officials reported nine COVID-19-related deaths Monday. Eight were people living in Rock Island County, while Iowa health officials reported one death in Scott County. Rock Island's COVID-19 death toll increased to 266. The increase came on the same day Rock Island County health officials reported 30 new COVID-19 cases, increasing the county's total to 10,996 since the start of the pandemic. Illinois lawmakers will return to the capital city on Friday for a "lame duck" session that is expected to focus on the state's COVID-19 response, a nearly \$4 billion budget deficit and a host of social issues being advanced by the Legislative Black Caucus. The state's COVID-19 hospitalizations and average case positivity rate remain below second-wave highs while public health officials in Illinois continue to caution residents that a post-holiday surge could materialize. The Illinois Department of Public Health reported 5,059 new and probable cases of COVID-19 on Monday, with an average of 5,900 of new cases daily from Dec. 31 to Sunday. Those case figures are significantly lower than the second wave peak of 15,415 cases on Nov. 13 — which was the highest number of daily new cases reported since the pandemic began. Iowa athletics reported three positive COVID-19 PCR tests among 277 administered during the week of Dec. 28-Jan. 3. The 1.1% positivity rate is below the overall positivity rate of 2.8% Iowa has recorded in the 12,959 tests it has administered to student-athletes, coaches and staff members since testing began on May 29. Officials in Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller's office are warning consumers to be on the lookout for potential scams involving federal COVID-19 relief checks and vaccines. Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds appears to be prepared to push schools to return students to classrooms this month, reinforcing her plans to prioritize in-person learning even when a local school board believes it's too risky. Virus conditions deteriorated in Iowa in November with a spike in hospitalizations and deaths. Trends appeared to improve in early December, although the positivity rate in Iowa has started to tick back up again in recent weeks. Iowa has paid more than \$230,000 so far to a Utah company for contact tracing software that still is causing delays for some public health departments as they track COVID-19. In a service order amendment signed in July by Paul Trombino, interim director of the Iowa Department of Administrative Services, the state agreed to pay Domo \$75,000 a year for a new custom app for COVID-19 case investigation and contact tracing.

Tuesday, Jan. 5

The rolling seven-day average Illinois statewide case positivity rate dropped by one-tenth of a percentage point, from 8.6% the day before. The rate has remained below 10% since Dec. 8, and well below second-wave highs of 13.2% in mid-November. On Tuesday, the Illinois Department of Public Health reported 6,839 new confirmed and probable cases of the virus, among 991,719 total cases and more than 13.6 million tests since the pandemic began. The COVID-19 death toll has reached 16,959, including 126 additional deaths reported Tuesday. As of Tuesday, only four of the state's 11 mitigation regions had not met the criteria Gov. JB Pritzker's administration provided to return to Tier 2 mitigations, from Tier 3. Those areas are Region 4, which covers five southwestern counties along the Missouri border; Region 5, which spans 20 counties in southern Illinois; Region 6, which covers 21 southeastern counties reaching the Indiana border; and Region 9, which includes McHenry and Lake counties.

Wednesday, Jan. 6

The Rock Island County Health Department confirmed the COVID-19-related deaths of three more residents Wednesday — and Illinois announced a change to the vaccination schedule aimed at preventing the death of older people in vulnerable groups. The death toll on the Illinois side of the Quad-Cities is 274. Iowa officials did not report any deaths Wednesday in Scott County, where the number of people lost to the pandemic stands at 153. The Illinois Department of Public Health and J.B. Pritzker announced a modified vaccine schedule aimed at helping people of color. Stage 1B vaccinations will include all persons 65 years old or older. Gov. Kim Reynolds is pushing for legislation requiring all school districts to offer a 100% in-person learning option. At a news conference last month, Reynolds indicated schools could be required to offer face-to-face instruction. The governor cited studies showing the virus does not spread as rapidly among school-aged children as it does among adults, and she expressed concern that students who are learning remotely could fall behind. House Speaker Pat Grassley, R-New Hartford, said whatever the Legislature decided this year needed to revolve around parental choice. There was a time when Iowa lawmakers took up funding for K-12 schools in the first month of each legislative session to highlight the priority Iowans place on education. This year, about \$3.4 billion — nearly 44% of the Iowa's \$7.77 billion general fund budget — is going to K-12 education. When the Iowa Legislature convenes Monday, the school funding challenge will be made more difficult by the impact COVID-19 has had on school finances, enrollment and student achievement. Bettendorf City Hall will reopen to the public Monday, according to a news release issued Wednesday by the city's public information officer, Lauran Haldeman. Visitors will see social distancing signs, hand sanitizing areas and plastic-glass barriers in front of the reception area. Face coverings must be worn in the building. Haldeman said the city would encourage citizens to conduct as much business as possible via online, phone or the drop box. Statewide Tier 3 COVID-19 mitigations could be lifted within 10 days in Illinois. Starting Jan. 15, exactly one incubation period from New Year's Day, any region that has met requirements for a reduction of mitigations will be able to move out of the Tier 3 mitigation plan, Gov. JB Pritzker announced Wednesday. "I'm cautiously optimistic as there are some early signs indicating that some regions have made real progress and won't reverse that progress this week or next," Pritzker said. The entire state has been under Tier 3 restrictions since Nov. 20 in an effort to combat a potential holiday surge in cases. Illinois will make COVID-19 vaccinations available to residents age 65 and older in the next inoculation phase, Gov. JB Pritzker announced Wednesday as the state neared 1 million infections. Iowa surpassed 4,000 coronavirus-related deaths on Wednesday, marking another milestone with its infection rate rising again and most people still months from being able to get vaccinated. Officials in Polk County, home to Des Moines, released a tentative timeline this week warning that the general public likely won't be able to get vaccinated until mid to late 2021. The congregation at First Baptist Church in Geneseo has found a way to continue to recognize first responders, even in the midst of the current pandemic. At the end of 2018, the congregation added an event to its church calendar. The Rev. David Murphy, church pastor, said the church wanted to show appreciation to police officers, firefighters, dispatchers and other first responders by hosting a breakfast in their honor. Iowa lawmakers for years have refused to fund the Board of Regents' full appropriations requests — at times delivering cuts instead — even as the public universities raise tuition and slash programs that administrators say can be saved only with more legislative support or even more rate increases. Given the pandemic and lawmakers expecting "more spending requests than ever," this legislative session isn't primed to deviate from that trend — even with campus leaders arguing it should.

The turn of the new year did not result in any good news in regards to the Illinois High School Association and the pause it has on winter sports. As of Tuesday, IHSA Board president Katy Hasson said that no new talks are planned with Gov. JB Pritzker or the Illinois Department of Public Health, which still has the state in Tier 3 mitigation levels because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rock Island County Health Department will continue vaccinating health care workers on Jan. 12, at a socially-distanced drive-thru clinic from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Greater Quad-City Auto Auction, 4015 78th Ave., Milan, according to Nita Ludwig, administrator of the department. In Illinois, health care workers include: clinicians, (nurses and nursing assistants, physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants), physical/occupational/speech therapists, respiratory technicians, dentists, dental hygienists, pharmacists, plasma and blood donation staff, morticians, home health workers, school nurses, optometrists, COVID-19 testing staff, dialysis staff, urgent care workers, corrections nurses/aides, vaccine clinic workers, group home residential staff, environmental service and reception staff at congregate care facilities, congregate care surveyors, hospice and palliative care staff and

community health workers when acting as health aide or health translators. Once Rock Island health care workers are vaccinated — they are Phase 1A — the department will begin Phase 1B at the same drive-thru facility at the Greater Quad-City Auction in Milan. Iowa reported seven additional coronavirus-related deaths on Tuesday, raising the state total to 3,999. Iowa's per capita death rate moved up one notch to the 14th highest in the nation with 126.5 deaths per 100,000 people, according to researchers at Johns Hopkins University. Deaths caused by COVID-19 appear to have resulted in record numbers of deaths overall in Iowa. Recently updated state data shows 3,952 people died in Iowa in November, the highest single-month death total for the state, according to Iowa Department of Public Health records. Iowa's death total last year is the highest single-year total at least since 1915, public health data in available vital statistics records show. Desks were a recent donation to the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center's hybrid learning program for Rock Island-Milan School District students. The program was created so students kept from their normal learning routines by the coronavirus have a place to participate in online learning while their parents work.

Thursday, Jan. 7

The Rock Island County Health Department reported 85 new COVID-19 cases, bringing the total number to 11,178. Currently, 43 patients are hospitalized with COVID-19 in Rock Island County. The number of deaths stands at 274. Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds signed a new Public Health Disaster proclamation Thursday that modifies existing public health measures designed to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The proclamation continues to require that when people are in an indoor public space, and unable to social distance for 15 minutes or longer, masks are required to be worn. Spectator limits for sporting and recreational gatherings, including for high school-sponsored events will be lifted Friday, Jan. 8. Other public health measures have been extended until Feb. 6. The Quad-City Regional Auto Show scheduled for February has been canceled because of continued concerns and current guidelines surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. The show is rescheduled to Feb. 11-13, 2022. As the Quad-Cities reported 164 more positive cases of COVID-19, Illinois surpassed 1,000,000 cases, and vaccination efforts continued to be slowed by lack of supply. Though both Illinois and Iowa remain in Phase 1A of the vaccine rollout — which applies only to health care workers and staff and residents of long-term care facilities — Ed Rivers, Scott County's health department director, said who will get the vaccination in the second phase, 1B, has not been outlined in Iowa. In 2019, Day of the Dead activities at the Figge Art Museum in Davenport drew about 4,000 people in a high-energy potpourri of decorating sugar skulls, eating chips and salsa, listening to music and having their faces painted. In 2020, with in-person restrictions because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mexican holiday celebration was more subdued and drew about 700 people online for a program. In fact, 700 participants has been the typical response for each of the museum's monthly Family Days. Art activities are centered around a particular artist, with a supply kit similar to those offered for Day of the Dead, accompanied by online programs and an opportunity to visit the museum in person for free. But the museum is holding its own with the \$750,000 it receives annually from the city of Davenport for taking care of the city's art collection, and a total of \$580,900 in emergency grants targeted for COVID-19 relief. This includes \$264,000 from the Payroll Protection Program of the federal CARES Act and \$111,5000 from the Iowa Arts Council. The museum's board of trustees also chipped in \$78,000 during the museum's closure last spring from mid-March to the first weekend in June. Since reopening, attendance remains capped at 100 visitors at a time. The museum temporarily furloughed seven part-time employees but is now back to a full staff of 29 full- and part-time employees. The museum is expecting things to improve greatly once vaccines become more readily available.

Friday, Jan. 8

Rock Island County added two deaths for a total of 276 and 71 new cases for a total of 11,249. Scott County added 225 new COVID-19 cases for a total of 14,834 positive COVID-19 cases and one death for a total of 154. The state of Iowa added 2,241 new COVID-19 cases for a total of 293,977 while its death total is 4,124.

Load-Date: January 16, 2021

Iowa offers small pay hike to unionized law officers

The Daily Nonpareil (Council Bluffs, Iowa)

December 2, 2020 Wednesday

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Section: GOVT AND POLITICS

Length: 683 words

Byline: Rod Boshart Gazette Des Moines Bureau

Body

DES MOINES — State negotiators opened the latest round of contract talks with unionized government employees Tuesday by offering a pay increase of one-half of 1 percent for each of the next two fiscal years.

Nathan Reckman of the Iowa Department of Administrative Services made the wage proposal to representatives of the roughly 600-member State Police Officers Council on a Zoom call.

The council's negotiators last month requested a 3 percent across-the-board pay increase for fiscal 2022 and 3.5 percent in fiscal 2023 as part of a new two-year collective bargaining pact effective July 1.

Department interim director **Paul Trombino**, the state's lead negotiator, and top council representatives did not comment on the state's proposal in open session.

Also, officials with the governor's office did not respond to requests for comments after the Zoom meeting, but SPOC President Jason Bardsley expressed hope the two sides could meet somewhere in middle during their upcoming talks.

"We appreciate the offer back from them," said Bardsley in an interview. "We understand the state's position on where they're at but we also would like to make sure that they understand that we're trying to stay competitive in a job field that is very hard to attract people to and we want to stay competitive with some of the other larger agencies in the state of Iowa and that's what we're going to try to move forward in the future to do."

Even though the state's wage proposal was a modest increase, Bardsley said "it's better than contracts in the past that we've received from them. We've received zero and zero on the first offer in the past from them, so by receiving a half and a half it didn't surprise us but you always sort of hope that the one day that maybe they just offer something right up front on the first one and you're done but that's a dream."

Bardsley noted that most of the peace officers they represent are essential personnel dealing with a worldwide panel, adding "we've had our fair share of cases during the pandemic and with everything that has gone on since March of the last year I think the DPS and DNR, we have truly had to step up in some extraordinary situations and I hope that is taken into consideration. We will definitely make that argument as we move forward."

Negotiators now will schedule closed-door talks aimed at reaching a labor contract covering the next two fiscal years by March 15. Should the two sides reach an impasse, their differences will be resolved with binding arbitration under state law.

The bargaining unit is made up of about 600 state troopers, special agents with the Division of Criminal Investigation and the Division of Narcotics Enforcement, state fire inspectors and agents, Iowa conservation officers and Iowa park rangers. The union and state negotiators had agreed on a 2.5 percent annual across-the-board wage increase in the current contract.

On Monday, Danny Homan, president of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council 61, the state's largest public employees union, requested a 3 percent across-the-board wage increase in each of the next two fiscal years for its members.

AFSCME represents roughly 19,000 members that includes nurses, corrections officers, university employees and transportation workers, among other public workers. The current state contract provides base wage increases of 2.1 percent and runs through the end of the fiscal year in June.

In February 2017, the Republican-controlled Iowa Legislature overhauled the state's collective bargaining laws, stripping most elements for which public employees may bargain through union representation.

The law, which was signed by then-Gov. Terry Branstad and upheld by the Iowa Supreme Court, limits most public-sector union contract negotiations to base wages capped by the cost of living, while eliminating such issues as health insurance and supplemental pay as mandatory topics for discussion.

Public safety employees, though, are allowed to bargain on a wider range of issues than other state employees, including health insurance benefits.

Load-Date: December 2, 2020

End of Document

State offers new explanation of virus data

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

August 14, 2020 Friday

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Section: A; Pg. 1

Length: 1003 words

Byline: JEFF MONTGOMERY , jeff.montgomery@thmedia.com

Body

BY JEFF MONTGOMERY

jeff.montgomery@thmedia.com

Two days after the Iowa Department of Public Health disclosed its method for calculating 14-day average positivity rates for COVID-19, state officials put forth a different explanation for how such figures are determined.

Meanwhile, a Telegraph Herald analysis found as many as one-quarter of new coronavirus cases reported in Dubuque County in a two-week stretch were not factored into the 14-day positivity rate posted to the state of Iowa's website.

Pat Garrett, a spokesman for Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds, reframed the state's method for calculating such rates in a phone call with the Telegraph Herald Thursday morning.

"(The way) we calculate 14-day positivity rates, is the sum total of individual positive cases from 14 days divided by the sum total of total individuals tested over 14 days," Garrett said.

This explanation differs from one offered two days earlier by Iowa

Department of Public Health spokeswoman Amy McCoy. On Tuesday, McCoy said the state determined 14-day positivity rates by taking the

"daily percentage of individuals positive" over the course of two weeks, and dividing that total by 14. Such an approach would weigh all days equally, even if the number of people tested on these days varied.

McCoy double-checked these results with data professionals Tuesday evening before emailing the Telegraph Herald to confirm that her description did, indeed, accurately describe the state's methodology.

Following Thursday's phone call with Garrett, however, the Telegraph Herald contacted McCoy, who reversed course and said the state does base its results on the sum total of new cases.

Such calculations are of critical importance as a return to school looms.

State officials said late last month that school leaders can ask for permission to close buildings or districts only if their counties have a 14-day average positivity rate of at least 15% and at least 10% of students are absent, or if the county has a 20% positivity rate over 14 days.

FURTHER ANALYSIS

On Thursday, Garrett also called into question recent Telegraph Herald reporting that indicated the state's 14-day positivity rates in Dubuque County fail to match underlying data.

The state of Iowa has recently pegged Dubuque County's two-week positivity rate at around 11%, while the Telegraph Herald's analysis of the state's own, underlying figures has yielded results around 14%.

Garrett emphasized that the state website offers a consistent location where residents can learn about the 14-day positivity rate and encouraged Iowans to accept those findings at face value, rather than conducting their own math.

"It doesn't make sense for school districts and, frankly, newspapers to constantly calculate something and expect to get the exact same result as our website," Garrett said.

Ongoing attempts to pair local, 14-day positivity rates with underlying figures - also issued by the state itself - consistently reveal widely varying results, however.

The state of Iowa's coronavirus dashboard includes a graph listing the number of new COVID-19 cases identified each day in Dubuque County. On Thursday, the Telegraph Herald analyzed the daily results stretching from July 30 through Aug. 12.

The new, positive cases from each of these individual 14 days adds up to 238 new cases. When divided by the new tests in that time frame - 2,184 - the state comes up with a two-week positivity rate of 10.9%.

However, in a nearly identical, two-week time frame, beginning at 5p.m. on July 29 and concluding at 5p.m. Aug. 12, state data tracked by the TH revealed far different results.

Within that time frame, the state reported that total tests grew from 18,892 to 21,098 - an increase of 2,206. That is very similar to the 2,184 new tests utilized for the state's 14-day positivity average.

Meanwhile, positive cases grew from 1,405 to 1,719 - an increase of 314 cases in the 14-day period beginning and ending at 5p.m. In the comparable stretch of time, the state's 14-day analysis identified 238 new cases. That means 76 new cases were not factored into the state's 14-day positivity analysis.

Differences such as this, the state attributes to the difference in time frames. In this scenario, that would mean some 76 cases were added to state tallies between 5 p.m. and midnight on July 29, the only period represented in the TH's 5 p.m. calculation versus the rate the state calculated based on the numbers at midnight.

DATA DISCREPANCIES

State officials blamed the data discrepancy on when the Telegraph Herald was recording its daily data benchmarks.

"We are counting results that come in between 12a.m. and (11:59p.m.)," said Paul Trombino, chief operating officer for the office of Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds. "It is a full day ... you are taking a different view and look at the data."

Even when adjusting the time frame to account for this theory, however, dozens of newly reported cases still were not accounted for by the state.

Between 11a.m. on July 30 and 5p.m. on Aug. 12 - an abbreviated window of time that rests wholly within the 14-day window identified by the state - the state's tally of confirmed cases in Dubuque County rose by 291, meaning at least 53 new positives were not factored into the two-week average.

Trombino noted that other factors could lead to changes in how positives are accounted for, noting that further case investigation can sometimes reveal new information about where a positive test originated.

"A lot of times, when the report comes in, we don't get all of the information from labs," he said. "So a lot of times they may have an address and ZIP code, but maybe the zip code is incorrect, so they are actually residents of different counties."

Garrett on Thursday underscored that the manner in which state officials present data is fluid. He noted that getting this information to the public can be a complex process in the midst of "an unprecedented pandemic."

"I cannot underscore enough ... how many moving pieces are going on at any given time behind this data," Garrett said.

Load-Date: August 14, 2020

End of Document

Gazette investigates: State of Iowa signs \$50 million computing contract without typical competitive bidding

Sioux City Journal (Iowa)

March 2, 2020 Monday

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Section: STATE AND REGIONAL

Length: 1808 words

Byline: Erin Jordan Cedar Rapids Gazette

Body

In signing a \$50 million contract for a new cloud-based computer system, the state of Iowa sidestepped traditional competitive bidding procedures and chose a company with little state government experience whose lobbyist is Gov. Kim Reynolds' former chief of staff.

As one of the first state governments to hire California-based Workday to provide software to execute all its major functions — including payroll, expenses, inventory, financials, recruiting and grants management — Iowa is something of a guinea pig.

And the jury's still out on whether previous Workday projects at Iowa State University and the Iowa Department of Transportation will be successful. Both still are not fully implemented after rollout delays.

What concerns some lawmakers is the way Iowa chose Workday.

Instead of seeking proposals from multiple companies to see which best met Iowa's needs and was most affordable, state officials chose a generic contract Workday had signed in 2015 with a for-profit procurement organization in Texas.

Workday got this multimillion dollar deal after Jake Ketzner, Reynolds' chief of staff for more than a year, left her office and became a lobbyist for the company.

Workday got this multimillion dollar deal after Jake Ketzner, Reynolds' chief of staff for more than a year, left her office and became a lobbyist for the company. A spokesman said Ketzner had no role in Workday's contracts, but there have been further questions.

"You have to admit, it does raise some eyebrows," said Sen. Pam Jochum, D-Dubuque. "To me, that is something for government oversight. They need to pull him (Ketzner) in and look at the OCIO's contract and ask some really serious questions to make sure it was all on the up and up."

What Is Workday?

Workday, founded in 2005 and headquartered in Silicon Valley, lists thousands of customers on its website, including Amazon, Netflix, Bank of America, Kohl's, Overstock and Panera. It also serves school districts and universities, as well as some large cities and counties, but few state governments.

The state of Colorado is a Workday customer, but on a smaller scale than Iowa.

That state has spent nearly \$10 million so far to implement some human resources functions, said Doug Platt, communications manager for the Colorado Department of Personnel & Administration. Officials there plan to add a new component each year — paying as they go — to make sure each phase works before spending more money, he said.

"Our mission is to make sure we get things right and we don't get ourselves locked into a path that might be many years down the road," Platt said. "What this type of development does is keep all of our options open ahead of us."

Iowa chose Workday to replace two outdated computer systems for human resources and financial operations. Workday offers software-as-a-service, which means Iowa will get regular updates instead of having to plan ahead for a costly upgrade.

"That gives us a predictable cost cycle," said Paul Trombino, Reynolds' chief operating officer who's helping coordinate the Workday deal.

Iowa will pay nearly \$28 million for deployment of the new systems, which will be implemented in summer 2021 for HR and 2022 for financials. The ongoing software costs are about \$21 million over five years.

Iowa is optimistic the system will be simpler, more agile and more affordable over time.

Similar transitions elsewhere haven't always gone smoothly.

The Sacramento City Unified School District sued Workday and another company in 2018, saying they didn't provide a modernized system to increase efficiency and save money, as promised when the district paid \$5.2 million for a new computer system, the Sacramento Bee reported in August 2018.

"For approximately two years the project flailed, then ultimately failed," the district said in a 2018 statement. "While Workday and Sierra-Cedar got paid, in the end, they put the district right back where it started with nothing to show after over two years."

The district alleged the companies used the Sacramento contract to market themselves to other districts as experts in K-12 education technology, the Bee reported. That lawsuit continues in San Joaquin County Superior Court.

Workday did not respond to an email or phone messages from The Gazette seeking comment for this article.

ISU And Iowa DOT Choose Workday

Iowa law requires competitive bidding for most public purchases to get the best deal for taxpayers and to provide an open, accountable process. Exceptions exist, such as occasions when a desired product or service is produced only by one vendor or when an emergency requires faster purchasing.

Before ISU signed a \$17.7 million, five-year contract with Workday in September 2016, university officials sought competitive bids from companies to provide a cloud-based human resources and finance system as well as a new student platform that includes course registration, grade viewing and on-campus job searches.

"This contract was competitively bid," Cory Harms, ISU procurement director, said in an email. "We sent (a solicitation) to 10 companies and posted publicly on our website. We received three bids. Two were chosen for finalist demonstrations."

The Workday software was supposed to be implemented in fall 2018, but the HR and finance portions were launched July 1, 2019. The student platform rollout schedule has not been announced.

When the Iowa DOT hired Workday in 2017, it piggybacked its \$9.4 million, six-year contract on ISU's deal, avoiding competitive bidding.

The system was supposed to go live in fall 2018, but HR and payroll systems started in May 2019 and the finance portion is scheduled to be implemented July 1, said Jon Makovec, director of Iowa DOT's Budget and Business Systems.

"Once I got to see the product, prior to the project starting, I was pretty impressed by what it offers the DOT," he said.

Outsourcing Competitive Bidding

With new Workday systems going online at ISU and the Iowa DOT, state officials wanted to see if Workday could provide a statewide enterprise solution.

Instead of issuing a request inviting companies to apply, the Office of the Chief Information Officer, led since July 30 by Annette Dunn, used a provision of Iowa Code allowing the office to "cooperate with other governmental entities in the procurement of information technology."

"The OCIO utilized a national competitive RFP conducted and awarded by the National Cooperative Purchasing Alliance," Dunn wrote in an email to The Gazette.

The alliance is a for-profit organization in Houston, Texas, that solicits bids and signs contracts for governmental agencies — like the state of Iowa — to join.

The organization meets the requirement it be a governmental entity by paying the Region 14 Education Service Center in Abilene, Texas, about \$840,000 a year to be its "lead public agency" for the purpose of securing contracts.

The alliance solicited bids for "cloud administrative solutions" in 2015, advertising in USA Today and on the alliance's website, according to the group. Four companies, including Workday, submitted proposals and the alliance chose two companies — Workday and SHI, a company headquartered in New Jersey.

Cooperative Purchasing

Matthew Mackel, the alliance's director of business development, said it makes sense for government agencies to use cooperative purchasing groups.

"Most agencies, unless they are pretty large, can't leverage this kind of volume," Mackel said. "I don't think they (government purchasing departments) were doing a very good job keeping up with procurement. They were recycling contracts. They didn't have time to do the process like they should have done properly."

Mackel said he got the sense Iowa officials wanted to use Workday. By joining the alliance contract, they were able to get a competitively-bid contract without state politics coming into play.

"They get to use that vendor that they wanted to use. It saves them a lot of time and effort," he said.

Karam Kang, a Carnegie Mellon University associate professor of economics who studies competition in procurement, notes there may be a conflict of interest.

The alliance makes 2 percent of annual sales up to \$30 million for the cloud administrative solutions contracts, and 1.5 percent for \$30 million to \$50 million, documents show. So the group's profit from the Iowa contract is about \$900,000.

"The larger the contract is, the more fee the alliance will receive," Kang said. "It may be more profitable to broker high-cost contracts than low-cost ones."

Information technology contracts tend to be long-lasting and lucrative for the firm that secures the deal.

"Once you have an IT system built, it is costly to build a new IT system, so you just tend to improve what you have," Kang said. "Once you have a contract with one contractor you may have to keep going with that one contractor."

Former Staffer Becomes Lobbyist

Ketzner worked for former Gov. Terry Branstad's campaigns in 2010 and 2014 and served in the Branstad-Reynolds administration as a policy adviser and legislative liaison, according to a 2017 news release. Reynolds brought Ketzner back from the private sector in May 2017.

He served as chief of staff until June 2018 when Reynolds said he was leaving to "pursue opportunities outside state government."

While former state elected officials are prohibited by law from working as a lobbyist for two years after leaving office, public employees — even the governor's top aide — do not have the same rules.

Ketzner was registered to represent Workday by October 2018, a year before the Chief Information Officer signed the first contract. He represents 16 other clients now, including AdVentureland amusement park in Altoona, IBM, Juul Labs, KWIK Trip and Molson Coors, according to his online disclosure.

Reynolds' office says Ketzner did not have a role in helping Workday secure the state contract.

"Jake Ketzner no longer works for the state of Iowa and has not been involved in the state's Workday contracts," governor's spokesman Pat Garrett said.

When The Gazette called Ketzner to ask why he decided to lobby for Workday after leaving the governor's office, he said, "I'm not authorized to speak on behalf of the company so I'm going to decline comment."

The Gazette asked whether Ketzner could see why some people might feel it suspicious Workday secured a \$50 million state contract after he left the governor's office and started lobbying for the company. Ketzner hung up.

Based on Sen. Jochum's recommendation that the Government Oversight Committee investigate Ketzner's involvement in the Workday contract, The Gazette called Sen. Amy Sinclair, R-Allerton, who chairs the committee.

Sinclair said Tuesday she had requested information from the state about the Workday contract, but didn't want to comment until after she received those materials.

Load-Date: March 2, 2020

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Gazette Investigates: State of Iowa signs \$50 million computing contract without typical competitive bidding; Governor's former chief of staff is lobbyist for Workday, which secured the contract

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, IA)

28 February 2020

Web Edition

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Section: LIVING

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Byline: Erin Jordan

Body

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Workday did not respond to an email or phone messages from The Gazette seeking comment for this article.

ISU And Iowa DOT Choose Workday

Iowa law requires competitive bidding for most public purchases to get the best deal for taxpayers and to provide an open, accountable process. Exceptions exist, such as occasions when a desired product or service is produced only by one vendor or when an emergency requires faster purchasing.

Before ISU signed a \$17.7 million, five-year contract with Workday in September 2016, university officials sought competitive bids from companies to provide a cloud-based human resources and finance system as well as a new student platform that includes course registration, grade viewing and on-campus job searches.

"This contract was competitively bid," Cory Harms, ISU procurement director, said in an email. "We sent (a solicitation) to 10 companies and posted publicly on our website. We received three bids. Two were chosen for finalist demonstrations."

The Workday software was supposed to be implemented in fall 2018, but the HR and finance portions were launched July 1, 2019. The student platform rollout schedule has not been announced.

When the Iowa DOT hired Workday in 2017, it piggybacked its \$9.4 million, six-year contract on ISU's deal, avoiding competitive bidding.

The system was supposed to go live in fall 2018, but HR and payroll systems started in May 2019 and the finance portion is scheduled to be implemented July 1, said Jon Makovec, director of Iowa DOT's Budget and Business Systems.

"Once I got to see the product, prior to the project starting, I was pretty impressed by what it offers the DOT," he said.

Outsourcing Competitive Bidding

With new Workday systems going online at ISU and the Iowa DOT, state officials wanted to see if Workday could provide a statewide enterprise solution.

Instead of issuing a request inviting companies to apply, the Office of the Chief Information Officer, led since July 30 by Annette Dunn, used a provision of Iowa Code allowing the office to "cooperate with other governmental entities in the procurement of information technology."

"The OCIO utilized a national competitive RFP conducted and awarded by the National Cooperative Purchasing Alliance," Dunn wrote in an email to The Gazette.

The alliance is a for-profit organization in Houston, Texas, that solicits bids and signs contracts for governmental agencies — like the state of Iowa — to join.

The organization meets the requirement it be a governmental entity by paying the Region 14 Education Service Center in Abilene, Texas, about \$840,000 a year to be its "lead public agency" for the purpose of securing contracts.

The alliance solicited bids for "cloud administrative solutions" in 2015, advertising in USA Today and on the alliance's website, according to the group. Four companies, including Workday, submitted proposals and the alliance chose two companies — Workday and SHI, a company headquartered in New Jersey.

Cooperative Purchasing

Matthew Mackel, the alliance's director of business development, said it makes sense for government agencies to use cooperative purchasing groups.

"Most agencies, unless they are pretty large, can't leverage this kind of volume," Mackel said. "I don't think they (government purchasing departments) were doing a very good job keeping up with procurement. They were recycling contracts. They didn't have time to do the process like they should have done properly."

Mackel said he got the sense Iowa officials wanted to use Workday. By joining the alliance contract, they were able to get a competitively-bid contract without state politics coming into play.

"They get to use that vendor that they wanted to use. It saves them a lot of time and effort," he said.

Karam Kang, a Carnegie Mellon University associate professor of economics who studies competition in procurement, notes there may be a conflict of interest.

The alliance makes 2 percent of annual sales up to \$30 million for the cloud administrative solutions contracts, and 1.5 percent for \$30 million to \$50 million, documents show. So the group's profit from the Iowa contract is about \$900,000.

"The larger the contract is, the more fee the alliance will receive," Kang said. "It may be more profitable to broker high-cost contracts than low-cost ones."

Information technology contracts tend to be long-lasting and lucrative for the firm that secures the deal.

"Once you have an IT system built, it is costly to build a new IT system, so you just tend to improve what you have," Kang said. "Once you have a contract with one contractor you may have to keep going with that one contractor."

Former Staffer Becomes Lobbyist

Ketzner worked for former Gov. Terry Branstad's campaigns in 2010 and 2014 and served in the Branstad-Reynolds administration as a policy adviser and legislative liaison, according to a 2017 news release. Reynolds brought Ketzner back from the private sector in May 2017.

He served as chief of staff until June 2018 when Reynolds said he was leaving to "pursue opportunities outside state government."

While former state elected officials are prohibited by law from working as a lobbyist for two years after leaving office, public employees — even the governor's top aide — do not have the same rules.

Ketzner was registered to represent Workday by October 2018, a year before the Chief Information Officer signed the first contract. He represents 16 other clients now, including AdVentureland amusement park in Altoona, IBM, Juul Labs, KWIK Trip and Molson Coors, according to his online disclosure.

Reynolds' office says Ketzner did not have a role in helping Workday secure the state contract.

"Jake Ketzner no longer works for the state of Iowa and has not been involved in the state's Workday contracts," governor's spokesman Pat Garrett said.

When The Gazette called Ketzner to ask why he decided to lobby for Workday after leaving the governor's office, he said, "I'm not authorized to speak on behalf of the company so I'm going to decline comment."

The Gazette asked whether Ketzner could see why some people might feel it suspicious Workday secured a \$50 million state contract after he left the governor's office and started lobbying for the company. Ketzner hung up.

Based on Sen. Jochum's recommendation that the Government Oversight Committee investigate Ketzner's involvement in the Workday contract, The Gazette called Sen. Amy Sinclair, R-Allerton, who chairs the committee.

Sinclair said Tuesday she had requested information from the state about the Workday contract, but didn't want to comment until after she received those materials.

Comments: (319) 339-3157; erin.jordan@thegazette.com

Iowa's Workday Timeline

Sept. 26, 2016 — Iowa State University signs \$17.6 million contract with Workday, a California-based software company. It's later announced in the Iowa State Daily newspaper.

Sept. 21, 2017 — Iowa Department of Transportation signs \$9.4 million contract with Workday, piggybacking on financial terms set by ISU contract.

June 8, 2018 — Jake Ketzner leaves as Gov. Kim Reynolds' chief of staff to "pursue opportunities outside state government."

Oct. 1, 2018 — First date Ketzner is listed as a lobbyist for Workday.

Oct. 30, 2019 — Iowa Office of the Chief Information Officer signs \$21 million, five-year contract with Workday to provide human resources and financial cloud-computing services.

Feb. 11, 2020 — Iowa OCIO signs \$28 million Workday contract for implementation of human resources systems by summer 2021 and financial systems by summer 2022.

Graphic

(File photo) The Iowa State Capitol building in Des Moines, photographed on Tuesday, June 10, 2014. (Liz Martin/The Gazette) Sen. Pam Jochum, D-Dubuque Jake Ketzner, lobbyist Annette Dunn, Iowa chief information officer Sen. Amy Sinclair, R-Allerton

Load-Date: February 28, 2020

End of Document

Corps under fire as officials assess damage

Tri-State Neighbor (Sioux Falls, South Dakota)

March 29, 2019

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Section: STATE AND REGIONAL

Length: 525 words

Byline: Jeff DeYoung

Body

MALVERN, Iowa — Government officials met with farmers in southwest Iowa March 29 to discuss options for those affected by flooding in more than half of Iowa's counties.

Sen. Charles Grassley, USDA undersecretary Bill Northey and Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig were among the officials who gathered in the Mills County community of Malvern to speak to a crowd of about 350 area residents.

Grassley said the damage is much worse than the major flood in 2011, which covered large chunks of Fremont and Pottawattamie Counties in southwest Iowa. Mills County's levee system held in 2011 but was breached in a handful of locations this year.

He said there is a \$13.5 billion disaster aid bill on the floor of Congress, but that figure was set prior to the flooding that began in mid-March in Iowa, Nebraska and Missouri.

"It's not going to be enough," Grassley said. "We really don't know what kind of dollars it's going to take."

Like several people in attendance, Grassley set his sights on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its policies regarding river management.

"The Corps never learns from the past," he said. "It's kind of difficult to even get them to listen to a senator or anyone in Congress. They need to learn from history."

Brian Johnson, who farms near Percival in Fremont County, said flooding should not be lumped into the same category as other disasters.

"The government had a hand in this one," he said. "It's really important to emphasize that the Corps had an effect on the severity of it."

Northey discussed options that may be available to farmers and commented on the millions of bushels of grain likely ruined by the flooding.

"We don't really have a program to handle those big losses," he said.

Over the short-term, fields are going to have to be cleaned up. He said while the federal government would pay for some of the expenses, the rest will likely be paid by the farmer.

"We are only going to be able to pay for portion of what you lost," Northey said. "We don't yet know how big this is."

He said the Emergency Conservation Program will oversee most of the cleanup of fields caked in crop residue. That program is run through FSA, he added.

"We have the money to get started, but we are going to need more," Northey said, adding some funding may also be available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

He said livestock losses are partially covered through the Livestock Indemnity Program.

Changing the crop insurance cap will not happen this year, he said, and some farmers will likely be unable to plant a crop in 2019.

"If the levees aren't repaired this year, your crop insurance rates will probably go up next year because there is more risk," he said. "Premiums will go up when it hurts the most."

Paul Trombino, chief operating officer for Gov. Kim Reynolds, said the governor's office is working to develop a long-term solution to the levee issue.

"The governor isn't just looking at a short-term fix," he said. "We are going to work with the levee districts and get their input, then meet with the Corps of Engineers. We need to move on this, because a lot more of this is coming."

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End of Document

Here's what Reynolds' top appointees make; Her chief of staff, state housing director among top earners

Des Moines Register (Iowa)

January 30, 2019 Wednesday

1 Edition

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Length: 1383 words

Byline: By, Kevin Hardy and Barbara Rodriguez, Des Moines Register

Body

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds will pay Debi Durham an annual retention bonus of \$50,000, giving the director of the state's economic development and housing agencies one of the highest paychecks in the governor's new cabinet.

Iowa law sets the governor's salary at \$130,000, meaning three Reynolds staffers and six of her newly appointed directors earn more than she does. The Des Moines Register requested the salaries of the nine recently appointed state directors and the 21 new staffers in the governor's office.

"The salaries paid to governor's staff and department directors are what it takes to recruit and retain top talent," said Reynolds spokesman Pat Garrett.

With her bonus, Durham's annual compensation will rise to \$204,300 per year - \$50,000 above the state's maximum pay of \$154,300 for most directors. Iowa's administrative rules allow some employees to earn retention bonuses if they agree to stay on for a certain period of time.

Durham has led the Iowa Economic Development Authority since 2011. In early January, the governor announced that Durham would also take control of the Iowa Finance Authority. The finance agency has been under interim management since its former director was fired allegedly for making multiple sexually inappropriate comments to female staffers last spring.

Durham's new salary represents about a \$20,000 bump over what she had been making when she was running just the economic development agency. She told the Register that the state should look at the competitiveness of salaries for all the directors.

"I didn't do it obviously for the salary, because I could do a lot more in the private sector," she said.

Matt Strawn, who will lead the Iowa Lottery, will make the second most of the new directors Reynolds appointed in January. The former chairman of the Iowa Republican Party, with an extensive background in public relations, will earn \$189,217.60 annually. Former lottery director Terry Rich, who had directed the lottery for more than a decade, earned \$248,908.20 in 2018.

The state is paying three newly appointed directors \$148,512: Dan Craig, interim director of the Iowa Department of Corrections; Jeff Franklin, interim director of the Office of the Chief Information Officer; and Adam Humes, director of the Iowa Department of Revenue.

In the governor's office, the top earners include:

Chief of Staff Sara Gongol, who earns \$157,019.20

Chief Operations Officer Paul Trombino III, who earns \$155,001.60

Chief Counsel Sam Langholz, who earns \$134,160

The chief of staff pay is a more than \$20,000 increase over the pay of Jake Ketzner, a former Reynolds chief of staff. He had a salary of \$136,714.76 in 2018, according to the state salary database.

Reynolds created a new position in tapping Trombino as chief operations officer. He was formerly director of the Iowa Department of Transportation under Branstad from 2011 to 2016.

State records show Trombino was paid \$152,668.80 in 2016 as DOT director.

"Even with the rate of inflation and securing top-tier talent, the governor's office is still operating more efficiently with less cost to the taxpayer than previous administrations," Garrett said.

The Iowa governor's office

is one of nation's leanest

Reynolds will spend \$1.43 million on annual staff salaries. Including the governor's salary of \$130,000 and Lt. Gov. Adam Gregg's \$103,212 pay, that number reaches \$1.67 million - about 80 percent of the \$2,103,954 state appropriation to the governor's office for this fiscal year.

Reynolds has requested an additional \$200,000 for additional staff positions in the next fiscal year, according to the Legislative Services Agency's analysis of the governor's budget recommendations.

Funding for the governor's office has been relatively steady in recent years, according to a review of LSA data, though Reynolds is currently spending less on staff than other recent Iowa governors.

Iowa has one of the nation's leanest governor's offices: Only seven states in 2018 had the same number or fewer staffers than Iowa did, according to the Council of State Governments Book of the States.

Reynolds is employing 21 staffers in her office this year, similar to the staffing level in governor's offices in surrounding states. Nebraska's governor employed nine staffers in 2018, Missouri had 21, Wisconsin had 34 and Minnesota employed 37, according to the report.

John Norris, a former Democratic candidate for governor who served as chief of staff under former Gov. Tom Vilsack, said he wasn't surprised by Reynolds' staff salaries.

"If you want to attract a high level of people to serve in these positions that are of significant responsibility, then you've got to pay them comparably to the private sector," he said.

Governor's salary among state's highest, but well behind very top

At \$130,000, Reynolds' salary ranks 2,926th among all state workers, according to an analysis of the Iowa employee salary database. She earns more than 95.1 percent of the state's 59,865 employees.

The median state employee salary is \$52,533.

Reynolds' salary is below the average salary for governors across the country, according to 2017 data from the Council of State Governments. The governor of California earns more than \$200,000 a year and the governor of Maine earns \$70,000.

David Roederer, Reynolds' budget director, said the governor's office has been understaffed as staff departed amid the transition from former Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad to Reynolds.

He said it's common for staffers to make more money than the governor. The governor's \$130,000 salary - which hasn't changed in more than a decade - is set by Iowa code. The Legislature would need to vote on an increase for Reynolds to make more.

"From my perspective, it's not that the others are so much higher - it's the fact that the governor's salary is what it is," he said. "But they know what those salaries are when they run for office."

The Register's Data Visualization Specialist Tim Webber contributed to this story.

Iowa department

head salaries

Here are the salaries for all of Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds' recently appointed directors:

Debi Durham, director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority and the Iowa Finance Authority: \$204,300, including an annual retention bonus of \$50,000

Matt Strawn, director of the Iowa Lottery: \$189,217.60

Dan Craig, interim director of the Iowa Department of Corrections: \$148,512

Jeff Franklin, interim director of the Office of the Chief Information Officer: \$148,512

Adam Humes, director of the Iowa Department of Revenue: \$148,512

Joyce Flinn, director of Homeland Security and Emergency Management: \$142,070, including an annual recruitment/retention bonus of \$30,000

Stephan Bayens, director of the Iowa Department of Public Safety: \$128,890

Chris Kramer, director of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs: \$105,830.40

Dale Woolery, director of Drug Control Policy: \$103,064

Iowa governor's

office staff salaries

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds earns \$130,000 annually. Lt. Gov. Adam Gregg earns \$103,212 annually. Here's how much each staffer in the governor's office earns:

Sara Gongol, chief of staff \$157,019.20

Paul Trombino, chief operations officer: \$155,001.60

Sam Langholz, chief counsel: \$134,160.00

Linda Fandel, special education advisor: \$117,478.40

Paige Thorson, deputy chief of staff and policy advisor on healthcare related issues: \$110,011.20

Catherine Huggins, chief advisor to the governor: \$102,024.00

Stephanie Groen, federal liaison based out of Washington, D.C.: \$91,811.20

Kayla Lyon, legislative liaison: \$90,001.60

Pat Garrett, communications director: \$85,009.60

Michael Boal, deputy legal counsel: \$76,003.20

Nate Ristow, policy advisor focusing on public safety issues: \$75,004.80

Logan Shine, policy advisor on economic development issues: \$54,017.60

Katherine Shaheen, executive assistant to the governor: \$52,998.40

Kirby Connell, scheduler for the governor and lieutenant governor: \$48,006.40

Nick Boeyink, director of boards and commissions: \$40,393.60

Meaghan O'Brien, policy advisor and researcher: \$40,310.40

Taylor Collins, policy advisor and assistant to lieutenant governor: \$34,008.00

Megan Hall, constituent service liaison: \$31,990.40

Damian Thompson, constituent service liaison: \$31,990.40

Lydia Hall, communications assistant: \$31,990.40

Kassidy Krause, intern director and assistant to the chief of staff: \$31,990.40

Graphic

Gov. Kim Reynolds gives her inaugural address after being sworn into office on Jan. 18 in Des Moines. Iowa law sets the governor's salary at \$130,000.

Kelsey Kremer/The Register

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End of Document

Debi Durham to take over Iowa Finance Authority

Des Moines Register (Iowa)

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1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A3

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Byline: By, Kevin Hardy and Barbara Rodriguez, Des Moines Register

Body

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds has tapped a close friend and a trusted political adviser to lead two troubled state agencies as she prepares to begin her first full term in office.

In announcing nine cabinet appointments Tuesday, the Republican governor said Debi Durham, director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority, will continue to lead that agency while also taking over control of the Iowa Finance Authority. Prominent Republican Matt Strawn, a former state Republican party chairman, will now run the Iowa Lottery.

Both agencies have experienced controversy. The finance authority, which has been plagued by a sexual harassment scandal and accusations of improperly spending taxpayer dollars, and the lottery has been under scrutiny after it was involved in the largest lottery scandal in U.S. history.

Reynolds last week announced new staff positions inside her administration, including the appointment of former Iowa Department of Transportation Director **Paul Trombino III** as her chief operations officer.

Her office did not release the salaries for any of the newly announced hires. Iowa Department of Administrative Services officials were not available to provide the salaries Tuesday. Salaries of state officials are public information.

Durham to lead two agencies

Durham has led the state's economic development agency since 2011, when Reynolds' predecessor Terry Branstad appointed her to the role. She was previously the president of the Siouxland Chamber of Commerce.

Aside from her work recruiting businesses to Iowa, Durham has maintained a close personal relationship with Reynolds: the two shared an apartment in the East Village of Des Moines while Reynolds served as lieutenant governor under Branstad.

Durham plans to take time to learn more about the staff and programs at the Iowa Finance Authority and how they complement the work of the state's economic development agency, she said in a statement. The finance authority administers affordable housing programs that range from homeless assistance to multifamily rental development.

Reynolds fired IFA Director Dave Jamison in March following allegations that he had made multiple vulgar and sexually inappropriate comments to female staffers. She appointed Carolann Jensen, the agency's chief programs officer, as interim director.

Multiple allegations of financial improprieties surfaced following Jamison's termination.

In late December, a state audit revealed that the agency misspent at least \$549,399 over the past two years.

Jennifer Cooper, chairwoman of the Iowa Economic Development Authority board, said Durham is well positioned to juggle administration of both agencies.

"I think, frankly, if anybody can handle two agencies, Debi can do it," said Cooper, a Des Moines bank executive appointed to the board by Branstad.

Durham was not available for an interview Tuesday, but answered a few questions through an agency spokeswoman, Jacque Matsen.

Matsen said Durham will continue to commute weekly between Des Moines and her home in Sioux City.

"I see tremendous potential for what we can accomplish working together," Durham said in a statement. "I also support the governor's bold vision for Iowa and know that in this expanded role, I can help achieve it."

When asked about possibly merging the two agencies, Matsen said it was "too early to answer." Instead, she said Durham is committed to "conducting a thoughtful review to develop a recommendation for how to best deploy IEDA and IFA resources going forward."

Sen. Mark Lofgren, a Muscatine Republican who helps oversee economic development funding at the Legislature, applauded Durham's leadership abilities but said he wanted to take some time to review her double appointment.

"I'll do my due diligence to make sure it makes sense," he said.

Strawn to head lottery system

Strawn will take over the state's lottery system, which has been under scrutiny in recent years after an Iowa lottery employee was prosecuted for rigging random number lottery games across the United States - the biggest lottery scam in U.S. history.

Eddie Tipton worked for the Multi-State Lottery Association, which is owned by 36 state lotteries, including Iowa's. In December, a Des Moines Register investigation found that he and his brother had repaid less than \$1,400 in restitution - despite owning property worth nearly \$2 million.

Strawn did not respond to a request for comment on Tuesday.

He previously served as the chairman of the Republican Party of Iowa and served as an informal adviser to Reynolds' successful 2018 campaign.

Strawn is the co-founder of Next Generation Public Affairs and has an extensive background in public relations. He also helped bring an Arena Football League professional franchise, the Iowa Barnstormers, to downtown Des Moines.

Other appointments announced Tuesday included:

Adam Humes will lead the Iowa Department of Revenue. He currently serves as the department's deputy director and previously he served as an assistant attorney general to the Iowa Attorney General.

Dan Craig will serve as interim director of the Iowa Department of Corrections while a nationwide search begins for a permanent director. He touts 34 years of experience in the correctional system, including serving as the deputy director for the Iowa Department of Corrections.

Stephan Bayens will lead the Iowa Department of Public Safety. He previously served as an assistant United States attorney and as an assistant county attorney for the Polk County Attorney. He also worked as a clerk on the Iowa Court of Appeals and worked at the Iowa attorney general's office.

Chris Kramer will become director of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs. She was named acting director of the department in August 2017 and previously served as its deputy director. Previously, Kramer was vice president of the Science Center of Iowa for 12 years.

Joyce Flinn has been named director of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. She was named acting director of the department in June 2018 and has been serving in various emergency management roles since 1997. She has served as chief of operations during numerous disaster responses.

Jeff Franklin was named interim director of the Office of the Chief Information Officer. He previously served as the deputy chief information officer and also worked at the Iowa Department of Administrative Services. He was also an information security officer and administrator for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Dale Woolery has been named director of Drug Control Policy. He previously served as an associate director for the department and has 24 years of experience in the agency. Prior to that, he worked as the station manager for KRNT radio.

Graphic

Debi Durham, Iowa Economic Development Authority director, talks with The Des Moines Register editorial board in 2017.

Register File Photo

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End of Document

Autonomous vehicles are coming. Cities need to start planning. Now; Experts don't agree on how soon, but driverless cars will change everything

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, IA)

20 October 2018

Web Edition

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Body

The day autonomous vehicles outnumber manned vehicles is coming, and experts say transportation and urban planners, public policy makers and others must begin working on this reality to ensure decisions and investments of today align with needs of tomorrow.

Autonomous vehicles, it is believed, could travel closer together, faster and in a more confined space. Lanes could be smaller and fewer. On-street parking could be minimized.

Vehicles could park themselves outside urban areas, creating more room for commercial development, bike lanes and wider sidewalks, and green space for recreation, parks, and to help manage stormwater. Seniors and those with disabilities could more easily access doctors and recreation, and those now lacking reliable transportation could have more employment opportunities.

Add to this that American drivers spend 29.6 billion hours a year commuting — 24 miles each way, on average — according to the U.S. Census Bureau, meaning a greater potential for workforce productivity if people can work on the go. Driver shortages plaguing shipping companies could be decreased, and the vehicles could operate more cleanly, safely and efficiently.

These are common theories of scholars and industry experts in transportation planning papers and articles. To be sure, considerable challenges also exist.

No one knows for certain when this day of a driverless vehicle saturated society will arrive or for sure what it will look like. Some suggest it's just a matter of years, others say decades or more.

In 'full swing' by 2030?

Paul Trombino, a former nominee to lead the Federal Highway Administration who now heads Iowa-based McClure Engineering, was seen as a visionary in how to modernize the transportation system and plan for a future of autonomous vehicles as director of the Iowa Department of Transportation from 2011-16.

"Right now, the biggest question is what do they have the need for in the existing system and will they have the same need in the future," Trombino said. "My belief is no. They should already be starting to think about this. Are there elements to be building in now to change the system?"

The transition to autonomous vehicles already has begun, Trombino added. The American Planning Association reports the top 11 automakers each have plans to have a fully autonomous vehicle on the road by 2021. By the 2030s, Trombino anticipates, autonomous vehicles will have a measurable foothold on public roadways.

This is important because roads are designed to last 30 or 40 years, bridges 75 to 100 years, and urban planning decisions of today — such as redeveloping blighted areas such as the New Bohemia District in Cedar Rapids and the Riverfront Crossing district in Iowa City — could last generations.

Autonomous vehicles may seem more sci-fi than reality at this point, but several research papers support Trombino's timeline and urge decision-makers to take it seriously.

A 2017 paper — called "Taming the Autonomous Vehicle: A Primer for Cities" for Bloomberg Philanthropies and the Aspen Institute Center for Urban Innovation — projected by 2025 that 6 percent of vehicles worldwide will be fully automated and 36 percent will be partially automated. By 2030, the transition will be in "full swing," and by 2035, the number will grow to 38 percent fully autonomous and 39 percent partially autonomous, according to the report.

By 2040, experts with the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers predict 75 percent of vehicles will be autonomous, according to the report.

Others see a longer transition.

Jeff Speck, an urban planner, designer and author who advised Cedar Rapids as it rethought downtown to make it more walkable and bikeable, wrote last year "that major change is unlikely to happen for several decades ... (and) other experts think that full autonomy will not happen at all."

Dan McGehee, an associate professor and director of University of Iowa's National Advanced Driving Simulator, said it will be 20 years before 90 percent of the vehicle fleet using roadways include the latest driver-assisted technology in today's new vehicle models. Fully autonomous vehicles having a meaningful presence on the road is at least 50 years away, he predicts.

The National League of Cities put out a "policy preparation guide" for autonomous vehicles last year.

Recommendations include begin planning now; consider policy development that could anticipate issues such as procurement and public safety; have a voice in developments at the state and federal level; and begin planning infrastructure needs and building data and computing capacity to position your city to take advantage of an automated mobility future.

Questions

Some public-sector planners and traffic engineers describe this as an exciting time, but also a time in which a lot of questions exist — and not many answers.

Will autonomous vehicles create more or less congestion? Will autonomous vehicles be a shared fleet or will people still largely own their own vehicles? Will public transit remain viable or needed?

How much data storage and broadband capacity will be needed and who will support it? How will autonomous vehicles affect revenue streams, such as parking and speeding tickets?

In Cedar Rapids, which is rebuilding its roads and has discussed a new downtown Five Seasons parking ramp, the autonomous vehicle future is on the radar but not a factor when designing the projects of today.

"Right now, when we are designing a road, we still have to design it to all of the current standards," said John Witt, a Cedar Rapids transportation engineer. But, he added, "It's coming. Someday down the road, every car could be an autonomous vehicle. But I don't think it will happen in our lifetime."

Regardless, Witt said, autonomous vehicles will need to function on roads of today and coexist with the non-autonomous fleet. The transition period to a more autonomous fleet will last a long time, he said.

For now, the focus is on traffic flow, ensuring accessibility for multiple modes of transportation, and making lane markings and signs discernible for both drivers and automated vehicles, which use markings and signs for lane awareness and speed control, he said. "Automated" refers to vehicles with some form of automation as opposed to driverless.

Wider shoulders

Donna Matulac is the automated vehicle technologies project manager at the Iowa DOT. A big focus is collecting accurate data, she said. One project examines how automated vehicles can navigate construction zones and developing national standards for data to support this, she said.

An Iowa DOT Interstate 380 study this year identified pavement designed with automated vehicles in mind, continuous fiber optics and other infrastructure upgrades such as readable signs, cameras and sensors to feed into automated vehicle programs. Thicker, wider shoulders built today potentially could be autonomous-vehicle-only lanes in the future, Matulac said.

A new initiative called the Iowa Advisory Council on Automated Transportation unites key players from state and local government, private sector, insurance and research to examine "where from the state of Iowa perspective should we be going," Matulac said. The group is setting up subcommittees to focus on infrastructure, communications, economic development and safety, she said.

While Iowa has embraced automated vehicles on some fronts, it is among 34 states barring autonomous truck platoons.

Eastern Iowa has become a forerunner in the autonomous vehicle movement. The U.S. Department of Transportation last year named the Iowa City-Cedar Rapids corridor and the University of Iowa's National Advanced Driving Simulator as one of 10 designated automated vehicle proving grounds in the nation.

The Driving Simulator, the city of Iowa City and Bogdan Kapatsila, Chanel Jelovchan, Hossain Mohiuddin and Jeremy Williams — a group of master's students in the UI Urban and Regional Planning graduate program — recently began a partnership on a yearlong capstone project.

The project is designed to "help Iowa City prepare for the anticipated impacts of automated vehicles on the built environment and community" as well as increased prevalence of ride hailing.

The proposal calls to develop policy guidance for how ride-sharing and autonomous vehicles could fill gaps in the public transportation system and expand access to jobs and health care; a parking and complete streets plan with ride-sharing drop-off areas and reallocation of downtown parking and road space; and implications and integration of exclusive pedestrian and low-speed automated vehicle zones and how that impacts urban land use.

The project proposal requests recommendations for the next five to 10 years and the next 10 to 20 years.

"We are looking at hot spots, looking at areas humans might want automated vehicles — areas that are dense, downtown or employment bases," said Ashley McDonald, project manager for the Driving Simulator and a project mentor.

Darian Nagle-Gamm, Iowa City transportation director and a project lead for the city, said she hopes the project addresses how autonomous vehicle adaptation could be unique in Iowa City.

For example, a third of the traveling public move by bike, walking or public transit there, and the city wants to maintain that culture, she said.

"The picture is fuzzy right now, but we don't want to be caught in 20 years having not considered the impacts and be in a situation where you are backpedaling," she said.

■ Comments: (319) 398-8310; brian.morelli@thegazette.com

Recommendations for planners

Autonomous vehicles are on our roads today, so start planning now.

Decide policy development with the right people at the table.

Track and monitor federal and state developments and make your voices heard.

Begin planning infrastructure needs and building data and computing capacity to position your city to take advantage of an automated mobility future.

Source: National League of Cities

Levels of Automation

LEVEL 01

Function-Specific Partial Automation

An automated system that can assist parts of the driving task, such as controlling speed, braking or steering, for part of the time.

LEVEL 02

Function-Specific Full Automation

This enables a part of the driving to be entirely automated, with the human playing an active monitoring role, such as automatic parking.

LEVEL 03

Function-Specific Full Awareness Automation

There is awareness of the environment around the vehicle, and can fully automate and monitor some parts of driving. The human driver must be ready to take back control but is not actively monitoring every aspect of the driving.

LEVEL 04

Environment-Specific Full Automation

The driver no longer is expected to constantly monitor driving or the driving environment, but the automated system can only operate in certain environments and under certain conditions, such as highway-only automation.

LEVEL 05

Full Automation

The automated system can perform all driving and monitoring functions in all environments.

Source: National League of Cities

Graphic

A street scene is displayed as data visualized by a Google autonomous car. (Reuters)

Load-Date: November 16, 2018

End of Document

Shafer Kline & Warren sells to Iowa engineering firm

Kansas City Business Journal (Missouri)

April 10, 2018 Tuesday

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Length: 159 words

Byline: Staff

Body

A Des Moines-area engineering firm has acquired Lenexa-based Shafer Kline & Warren Inc. for an undisclosed amount.

McClure Engineering Co., based in Clive, Iowa, has assumed operational control, and Paul Trombino will be acting president, the companies announced in a release.

For McClure, the deal expands its geographic reach into the metro area and Oklahoma and its subject-matter reach into civil engineering and surveying. McClure also has offices in Columbia, St. Louis and Lake Ozark. For SKW, the deal provides a cultural fit that will maintain the firm for the future, CEO Ron Petering said in the release.

SKW ranks No. 17 on the Top Area Engineering Firms List, with 20 local engineers and \$15 billion in local revenue. It has 24 engineers overall and total revenue of \$34 million.

Did you find this article useful? Why not subscribe to Kansas City Business Journal for more articles and leads? Visit bizjournals.com/subscribe or call 1-866-853-3661.

Load-Date: April 10, 2018

End of Document

McClure Engineering Acquires Shafer, Kline & Warren

MarketLine Financial Deals Tracker

April 9, 2018 Monday

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Section: DEAL IN BRIEF

Length: 208 words

Body

McClure Engineering Company, a civil engineering company, has acquired Shafer, Kline & Warren Inc., an engineering, surveying and construction company. Both companies involved in the transaction are based in the US. As part of the transaction, McClure Engineering has assumed operational control of Shafer, Kline & Warren and Paul Trombino III, P.E. will be acting as president. Shafer, Kline & Warren clients will benefit from access to engineering disciplines in structural design, rail, intermodal facilities, aviation, and airport design, which are offered through McClure Engineering offices in Iowa and Missouri, US. Ron Petering, P.E. is the CEO of Shafer, Kline & Warren.

Deal Type	Acquisition
Sub-Category	Majority Acquisition
Deal Status	Completed: 2018-04-09

Deal Participants

Target (Company)	Shafer, Kline & Warren Inc
Acquirer (Company)	McClure Engineering Company

Deal Rationale

The acquisition of Shafer, Kline & Warren would enable McClure Engineering to add scale to its existing civil engineering and surveying services to expand its operations to the Kansas city metropolitan area and Oklahoma and to diversify its capabilities by adding Shafer, Kline & Warren's engineering, procurement, and construction services for the oil and gas industry.

Load-Date: April 17, 2018

Paul Trombino III a step closer to post with Federal Highway Administration; Former Iowa DOT director clears U.S. Senate committee

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, IA)

25 October 2017

Web Edition

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Section: NEWS

Length: 240 words

Byline: Mitchell Schmidt, THE GAZETTE

Body

Former Iowa Department of Transportation Director Paul Trombino III has cleared a U.S. Senate committee and is one step closer to becoming administrator of the Federal Highway Administration.

The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works voted to approve Trombino to lead the administration, which is part of the Department of Transportation, according to a Wednesday news release from U.S. Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, a member of the Senate committee.

"As we continue to move forward on an infrastructure plan, it is imperative that we have someone at the helm who understands the unique challenges of maintaining and updating rural Americas' roads, bridges, and highways," Ernst said in the release. "Mr. Trombino has proved both in his time as the Director of the Iowa Department of Transportation, and during his confirmation hearing that he has the necessary expertise to take on this role."

Trombino's nomination now heads to the Senate for a vote.

Trombino, 51, left his Iowa DOT post last fall after about five years in the position. Most recently he has been president of McClure Engineering Co., of Clive, which provides engineering services to clients in the Midwest.

As Iowa DOT director, Trombino was responsible for the planning, design, construction and operation of 9,400 miles of highways, 4,300 bridges and programs for transit, rail, aviation and motor vehicles.

I Comments: (319) 339-3175; mitchell.schmidt@thegazette.com

Load-Date: October 27, 2017

End of Document

Former Iowa DOT chief gets Senate nomination hearing

The Quad-City Times (Davenport, Iowa)

October 7, 2017 Saturday

_01 Edition

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Section: A; Pg. 5

Length: 376 words

Byline: James Q. Lynch The Gazette

Body

CEDAR RAPIDS - Paul Trombino III, who previously ran the Iowa Department of Transportation, appeared before a U.S. Senate committee Thursday considering his nomination to lead the Federal Highway Administration.

Trombino, who was nominated by President Donald Trump, was introduced to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works by Sen. Joni Ernst, who said she was "greatly optimistic" about his nomination.

Iowans are "proud of your nomination and believe there is no one better qualified to head the Federal Highway Administration, especially when we are at such a critical time for our nation's infrastructure," she said.

She called maintaining a robust transportation infrastructure, along with national defense, one of the federal government's core functions and vital to the economy.

Ernst, who worked with Trombino while a member of the Iowa Senate, called him an "invaluable partner and resource."

Noting that federal motor fuel tax revenues have been declining as vehicle fuel efficiency has improved, Ernst asked Trombino for his suggestions other than increasing the tax.

Trombino, 51, now the president of McClure Engineering in Clive, played a prominent role in winning the Iowa Legislature's support for a 10-cent-a-gallon increase in the state gas tax that generated more than \$200 million a year for transportation infrastructure projects.

That, Ernst said, "would really be an uphill battle here in Congress."

Trombino said there are a number of alternatives, including fees, especially those related to freight transportation. Overall, he added, whatever Congress does, "the key ingredient, from my perspective, is providing flexibility for states."

Providing states and communities with tools that allow them to "maximize dollars for a specific project is really the key ingredient."

His role, Trombino told senators, would be to provide advice and counsel, but ultimately, it will be lawmakers who make the choice on how to fund the transportation system.

In addition to leading the Iowa DOT from 2011-16, Trombino had a similar role with the Wisconsin DOT from 2001-11 and was president of both the Mid-American Association of State Transportation Officials and American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.

Load-Date: October 7, 2017

End of Document

Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Hearing; The nomination of Paul Trombino III to be administrator of the Federal Highway Administration.; Testimony by Paul Trombino, President, McClure Engineering, Johnston, Iowa

Congressional Documents and Publications

October 5, 2017

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Section: U.S. SENATE DOCUMENTS

Length: 800 words

Body

Chairman Barrasso, Ranking Member Carper, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. If I am confirmed, I will look forward to working with all of you to advance mobility on our Nation's highways.

I also want to thank Senator Joni Ernst for her very kind introduction. As Director of the Iowa Department of Transportation, I was honored to work with then Iowa State Senator and now U.S. Senator Ernst on improving the transportation system in the State of Iowa.

I am also pleased to introduce my wife, Trish Trombino, who is here with me today. Unfortunately, our two children, Enzo and Mila, are busy with their college studies at Iowa State University and are not able to be here today.

I am very grateful to President Trump and Secretary Chao for their confidence in my ability to serve in this key transportation position. The Nation's Highway System has always played a vital role in the quality of life of our people and provided a competitive advantage to our nation's businesses, and this is still true today. I have been blessed with a wonderfully diverse career in transportation for over 20 years and, if I am confirmed, these experiences will prove valuable to my new role at the Department of Transportation.

I have worked for two different state departments of transportation in Wisconsin and Iowa. While at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, I held senior executive roles as Operations Director for the Highway Division and Director of Statewide Bridges. In Iowa, I served under former Governor Branstad as Director of the Iowa Department of Transportation. During these two state government experiences, I gained keen insight into executing highway improvement projects, regulatory policies, and developing broad modal diversity in the transportation system.

While Director of the Iowa Department of Transportation, I served in leadership roles for our national state departments of transportation association, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), which was rewarding not only for building relationships with colleagues but also from sharing best practices and lessons learned. Finally, I have served in a leadership role with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Transportation Research Board, which is working with academia toward new process and technology improvements across all modes.

The core value of all transportation agencies is safety, and this value binds us across all levels of government and across all modes of transportation. The safety of the travelling public must continue to be the primary objective. Today, we are in an age of accelerating technological advancement in transportation vehicles, infrastructure, and systems. As these new technologies are developed and in the future become commonly available and used by the public, the challenge of promoting the public's safety while encouraging innovation will be increasingly important.

If confirmed as Federal Highway Administrator, I will be involved in helping to rebuild America's highways and bridges. Much needs to be done in this area, and I am eager to play a role in launching critical infrastructure projects as well as in maintaining America's highway network. Certainly, as the President has called for, we need a new emphasis on building and repairing infrastructure as well as common sense reforms in federal permitting. I support permit streamlining and look forward to contributing to responsible changes that reduce the time and money project sponsors must spend before a project can even begin. I do not believe we have to sacrifice environmental goals to accomplish process and paperwork reduction.

I have had wonderful experiences of directly working with policy makers at the city, county, state and federal government levels in transportation related projects and policy. One of the most valued lessons gained in my career have been the importance of establishing excellent communication and working relationships with policy makers. If I am confirmed, I commit to working with members of Congress, and particularly this committee, to achieve successful outcomes for transportation and the Nation's highways.

If I am confirmed, I look forward to the opportunity to work with all of you to improve the safety and mobility of all Americans. The Nation's highway system has long been the driving force for economic opportunity and success in the United States, and I am truly humbled at the opportunity to help advance the quality of life of Americans across the country through transportation.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to appear here today.

Read this original document at: https://www.epw.senate.gov/public/?a=Files.ServeandFile_id=BB9F1755-DC40-4481-B033-0A61B91739DE

Load-Date: October 6, 2017

End of Document

Former Iowa DOT head calls for federal 'flexibiliy' on road funding in confirmation hearing

Cherokee Tribune (Canton, Georgia)

October 5, 2017 Thursday

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Section: EXTRA

Length: 539 words

Byline: Staff Writer

Body

(Washington, D.C.) -- The former director of the Iowa Department of Transportation says he wants federal programs to remain flexible when it comes to maintaining and improving the nation's roads.

Paul Trombino -- who is currently president of McClure Engineering in Clive -- served as the head transportation official in Iowa from May 2011-November 2016. Trombino appeared in front of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works Thursday for hearing to confirm him as the next administrator of the Federal Highway Administration. Iowa Senator Joni Ernst, who worked closely with Trombino when she was a state senator, introduced Trombino to the committee.

"Iowans back home are proud of your nomination and believe there is no one better qualified to lead the Federal Highway Administration, especially when we are at such a critical time for our nation's infrastructure," said Ernst. "I look forward to hearing your testimony and I thank you for your willingness to serve your country in this capacity."

Trombino's nomination comes at a time when President Trump has called for the improvement of the nation's transportation infrastructure, most notably roads and bridges. When it comes to funding improvement projects, Trombino calls for a mixture of funding to pay for projects.

"At the state level, there are a multitude of opportunities that come forward," said Trombino. "Not only from gas taxes, but things like registration fees, all types of other fees; some even use some sort of sales tax. There's a whole mixture at the state level. When you get to the federal level, there is a strong mix of opportunity in different types of fees and other things that can be potentially on the table, especially when it comes to freight."

While in Iowa, Trombino was key in getting the state legislature to approve a 10-cent per gallon increase in the state gas and diesel tax. That increase generated around \$200 million per year in funding for road projects throughout the state. If confirmed, Trombino says he sees his role as advisory with the decision on a funding mechanism left in the hands of Congress.

"At the end of the day, as my experience was in the state of Iowa, the governor and the legislature had to make the decision on how they chose to fund the system," said Trombino. "That would be the same thing here. Congress will actually make the decision on what mechanism is best."

The Federal Highway Administration is a subsidiary of the U.S. Department of Transportation tasked with supporting state and local governments with the design, construction and maintenance of the nation's highway system. Because the administration deals with all 50 states, Trombino says he would like to see flexibility with the execution of federal transportation projects.

"The key ingredient from my perspective is providing flexibility for states," said Trombino. "Every state is a little bit different. They are rural needs and urban needs, which are different. Providing tools that allow them to implement projects and maximize their dollars for a specific project is really the key ingredient for them."

Prior to his stint in Iowa, Trombino served in various capacities within the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

Load-Date: October 8, 2017

End of Document

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NOMINEE, ADMINISTRATOR OF
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION PAUL TROMBINO III, PREPARED
TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ON SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
COMMITTEE NOMINATION HEARING, AS RELEASED BY THE COMMITTEE

SEC Wire

October 5, 2017 Thursday

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Section: NEWS EVENT

Length: 843 words

Body

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NOMINEE, ADMINISTRATOR OF FEDERAL HIGHWAY
ADMINISTRATION PAUL TROMBINO III, PREPARED TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ON SENATE ENVIRONMENT
AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE NOMINATION HEARING, AS RELEASED BY THE COMMITTEE

OCTOBER 5, 2017

SPEAKER: PAUL TROMBINO III NOMINEE, ADMINISTRATOR OF FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION U.S.
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

[*]

TROMBINO: Chairman Barrasso, Ranking Member Carper, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. If I am confirmed, I will look forward to working with all of you to advance mobility on our Nation's highways. I also want to thank Senator Joni Ernst for her very kind introduction. As Director of the Iowa Department of Transportation, I was honored to work with then Iowa State Senator and now U.S. Senator Ernst on improving the transportation system in the State of Iowa. I am also pleased to introduce my wife, Trish Trombino, who is here with me today. Unfortunately, our two children, Enzo and Mila, are busy with their college studies at Iowa State University and are not able to be here today.

I am very grateful to President Trump and Secretary Chao for their confidence in my ability to serve in this key transportation position. The Nation's Highway System has always played a vital role in the quality of life of our people and provided a competitive advantage to our nation's businesses, and this is still true today. I have been blessed

with a wonderfully diverse career in transportation for over 20 years and, if I am confirmed, these experiences will prove valuable to my new role at the Department of Transportation.

I have worked for two different state departments of transportation in Wisconsin and Iowa. While at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, I held senior executive roles as Operations Director for the Highway Division and Director of Statewide Bridges. In Iowa, I served under former Governor Branstad as Director of the Iowa Department of Transportation. During these two state government experiences, I gained keen insight into executing highway improvement projects, regulatory policies, and developing broad modal diversity in the transportation system.

While Director of the Iowa Department of Transportation, I served in leadership roles for our national state departments of transportation association, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), which was rewarding not only for building relationships with colleagues but also from sharing best practices and lessons learned. Finally, I have served in a leadership role with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Transportation Research Board, which is working with academia toward new process and technology improvements across all modes.

The core value of all transportation agencies is safety, and this value binds us across all levels of government and across all modes of transportation. The safety of the travelling public must continue to be the primary objective. Today, we are in an age of accelerating technological advancement in transportation vehicles, infrastructure, and systems. As these new technologies are developed and in the future become commonly available and used by the public, the challenge of promoting the public's safety while encouraging innovation will be increasingly important.

If confirmed as Federal Highway Administrator, I will be involved in helping to rebuild America's highways and bridges. Much needs to be done in this area, and I am eager to play a role in launching critical infrastructure projects as well as in maintaining America's highway network. Certainly, as the President has called for, we need a new emphasis on building and repairing infrastructure as well as common sense reforms in federal permitting. I support permit streamlining and look forward to contributing to responsible changes that reduce the time and money project sponsors must spend before a project can even begin. I do not believe we have to sacrifice environmental goals to accomplish process and paperwork reduction.

I have had wonderful experiences of directly working with policy makers at the city, county, state and federal government levels in transportation related projects and policy. One of the most valued lessons gained in my career have been the importance of establishing excellent communication and working relationships with policy makers. If I am confirmed, I commit to working with members of Congress, and particularly this committee, to achieve successful outcomes for transportation and the Nation's highways.

If I am confirmed, I look forward to the opportunity to work with all of you to improve the safety and mobility of all Americans. The Nation's highway system has long been the driving force for economic opportunity and success in the United States, and I am truly humbled at the opportunity to help advance the quality of life of Americans across the country through transportation.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to appear here today.

Load-Date: October 5, 2017

Barrasso Opening Statement at Nomination Hearing for Federal Highway Administration Head

Congressional Documents and Publications

October 5, 2017

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Section: U.S. SENATE DOCUMENTS

Length: 684 words

Body

Barrasso Opening Statement at Nomination Hearing for Federal Highway Administration Head

"We are well on our way to creating a legislative blueprint that will address America's most critical infrastructure needs."

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Today, U.S. Senator John Barrasso (R-WY), chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW), delivered the following remarks at a nominations hearing for Paul Trombino III to be administrator of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) at the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

For information on Mr. Trombino's testimony, go to: <https://www.epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/hearings?ID=ECAA936B-FC99-4D3B-89E4-BC94AE37E844>.

Senator Barrasso's remarks:

"Today we will consider the nomination of Paul Trombino to serve as administrator of the Federal Highway Administration or FHWA at the United States Department of Transportation. Congratulations.

"Mr. Trombino is well-qualified and brings broad expertise and over 20 years of experience as a state and national transportation leader to the critically important role of maintaining and improving our nation's roads, highways, and bridges.

"Mr. Trombino served as director of the Iowa Department of Transportation for more than five years.

"Prior to that, he worked for seventeen years at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, where he served at different times as bureau director, operations director, and civil engineering supervisor of the Highway Division.

"From 2015 to 2016, he served as president of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, AASHTO.

"AASHTO is a nonprofit, nonpartisan association representing highway and transportation departments in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

"In 2016, Mr. Trombino served as vice-chair of the Transportation Research Board's Executive Committee, an advisory group to the Chairman and Governing Board of the National Research Council on the nation's transportation system.

"In 2014, he served as president of the Mid America Association of State Transportation Officials.

"I applaud President Trump's nomination of such a highly accomplished and dedicated public servant for this important position.

"The Federal Highway Administration plays a central role in ensuring the mobility of the American people and the goods and services on which we all rely.

"The FHWA supports state, local, and tribal governments by providing financial support and offering technical assistance in the design, construction, and maintenance of our nation's highways, roads, and bridges.

"The FHWA also advances innovative practices and technology deployment that facilitate transportation project development, construction, and maintenance, and that enhance roadway safety.

"America's transportation infrastructure faces a lot of challenges.

"The next administrator will grapple with many of them.

"With the president's call for an infrastructure bill, this committee has heard from a broad range of stakeholders about how the Congress can better help the FHWA, state departments of transportation, private sector companies, and other stakeholders invest public resources in a sound and effective way to modernize America's transportation infrastructure.

"The president has called on us to maximize the impact of taxpayer dollars.

"This committee has already held seven hearings on how we can accomplish this goal.

"Working closely with its members we are well on our way to creating a legislative blueprint that will address America's most critical infrastructure needs.

"I was pleased to read last week that my friend, and ranking member, Tom Carper, wants to join the process of crafting an infrastructure bill that will make America great again.

"I look forward to his participation and input into this process.

"Clearly one item we can all agree on is the need to quickly confirm Paul Trombino.

"For far too long, the FHWA has been without Senate-confirmed leadership.

"Confirming Mr. Trombino to be administrator of the Federal Highway Administration will be an important step in addressing our nation's infrastructure needs."

Load-Date: October 5, 2017

End of Document

Former Iowa Department of Transportation chief gets Senate nomination hearing; Trombino nominated by Trump to lead Federal Highway Administration

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, IA)

5 October 2017

Web Edition

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Section: NEWS

Length: 391 words

Byline: James Q. Lynch, THE GAZETTE

Body

CEDAR RAPIDS — Paul Trombino III, who previously ran the Iowa Department of Transportation, appeared before a U.S. Senate committee Thursday considering his nomination to lead the Federal Highway Administration.

Trombino, who was nominated by President Donald Trump, was introduced to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works by Sen. Joni Ernst, who said she was "greatly optimistic" about his nomination.

Iowans are "proud of your nomination and believe there is no one better qualified to head the Federal Highway Administration, especially when we are at such a critical time for our nation's infrastructure," she said.

She called maintaining a robust transportation infrastructure, along with national defense, one of the federal government's core functions and vital to the economy.

Ernst, who worked with Trombino while a member of the Iowa Senate, called him an "invaluable partner and resource."

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I Comments: (319) 398-8375; james.lynch@thegazette.com

More stories from James Q. Lynch

Load-Date: October 11, 2017

End of Document

Senate Public Works Committee Issues Testimony on Nominee for Highway Administration

Targeted News Service

October 5, 2017 Thursday 10:29 AM EST

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Length: 799 words

Byline: Targeted News Service

Dateline: WASHINGTON

Body

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee issued the following testimony by Paul Trombino III, President Trump's nominee for administrator of the Federal Highway Administration:

"If I am confirmed, I will look forward to working with all of you to advance mobility on our Nation's highways.

"I also want to thank Senator Joni Ernst for her very kind introduction. As Director of the Iowa Department of Transportation, I was honored to work with then Iowa State Senator and now U.S. Senator Ernst on improving the transportation system in the State of Iowa.

"I am also pleased to introduce my wife, Trish Trombino, who is here with me today. Unfortunately, our two children, Enzo and Mila, are busy with their college studies at Iowa State University and are not able to be here today.

"I am very grateful to President Trump and Secretary Chao for their confidence in my ability to serve in this key transportation position. The Nation's Highway System has always played a vital role in the quality of life of our people and provided a competitive advantage to our nation's businesses, and this is still true today. I have been blessed with a wonderfully diverse career in transportation for over 20 years and, if I am confirmed, these experiences will prove valuable to my new role at the Department of Transportation.

"I have worked for two different state departments of transportation in Wisconsin and Iowa. While at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, I held senior executive roles as Operations Director for the Highway Division and Director of Statewide Bridges. In Iowa, I served under former Governor Branstad as Director of the Iowa Department of Transportation. During these two state government experiences, I gained keen insight into executing highway improvement projects, regulatory policies, and developing broad modal diversity in the transportation system.

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"Again, thank you for the opportunity to appear here today."

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Load-Date: October 23, 2017

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Member Updates

Institute of Transportation Engineers, ITE Journal

October 1, 2017 Sunday

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Section: Pg. 8; Vol 87; No. 10; ISSN: 01628178

Length: 476 words

Byline: Anonymous

Dateline: Washington

Body

ABSTRACT

Paul Trombino III, P.E. has been nominated by President Trump to be Administrator of the US Federal Highway Administration. Trombino is currently the president of McClure Engineering Company, a civil engineering company focused on transportation, aviation, water, and structures projects. He served as the director of the Iowa Department of Transportation from 2011 to 2016, where he was responsible for the planning, design, construction, and operation of 9,400 miles of highways, 4,300 bridges, the modal programs of transit, rail, aviation, and motor vehicle services.

FULL TEXT

Paul Trombino III, P.E. has been nominated by President Trump to be Administrator of the U.S. Federal Highway Administration. Trombino is currently the president of McClure Engineering Company, a civil engineering company focused on transportation, aviation, water, and structures projects. He served as the director of the Iowa Department of Transportation from 2011 to 2016, where he was responsible for the planning, design, construction, and operation of 9,400 miles of highways, 4,300 bridges, the modal programs of transit, rail, aviation, and motor vehicle services. Trombino served as the 2015-2016 President of the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials and as the 2016 ViceChair of the Transportation Research Board Executive Committee. He has a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and bachelor of science degree in economics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is a licensed professional engineer in the states of Iowa and Wisconsin.

Susan Langdon, P.E., PTOE (F), a principal within Stantec's Transportation practice, was named Transportation Engineer of the Year by the ITE Texas District (TexITE). The award honors one engineer each year for outstanding practice, teaching, or research of the science and art of transportation engineering in Texas. Susan is an ITE Fellow and has served the association in several capacities, including past president for TexITE and current executive board member for the ITE Traffic Engineering Council (TENC). A thought leader in traffic signal design, she also served as a panel expert for developing the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Signal Timing Manual, 2nd Edition, and she is currently an officer for the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Traffic Signal Systems Committee.

Susan received her bachelor of science in civil engineering from the University of Wisconsin. She is a professional engineer in multiple states and a certified professional traffic operations engineer (PTOE). Of recent note, she led the project team that helped the City of Richardson transition their traffic signal infrastructure to a forward-looking, proactive management system using Automated Traffic Signal Performance Measures software.

Load-Date: December 20, 2017

End of Document

Trump Nominates Former IDOT Director to Lead FHWA

Targeted News Service

September 18, 2017 Monday 2:40 AM EST

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Length: 294 words

Byline: Targeted News Service

Dateline: ROSEVILLE, Minn.

Body

The Industrial Fabrics Association International issued the following news release:

President Donald J. Trump nominated Paul Trombino II, former director of the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT), to lead the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Trombino, 51, led IDOT from 2011 to 2016, resigning in November 2016 to take a position as president of McClure Engineering of Clive, Iowa. The nomination requires approval by the U.S. Senate.

U.S. Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, a member of the Environmental Public Works Committee, endorsed Trombino in a September 11, 2017, statement.

"Our federal government has an important role when it comes to developing and maintaining our country's infrastructure, and along with national defense, it is one of its core functions," Senator Ernst said. "Having a robust and efficient transportation infrastructure is vital to our economy.

"Paul Trombino understands this, and is a committed public servant with more than 20 years of experience in updating our infrastructure at the local and statewide level. His work as President of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) as well as his service to Iowa as the director of the Iowa Department of Transportation gives him a valuable perspective and high level of dedication and (he) will be a tremendous asset to DOT to improve the lives of all Americans."

Trombino also served as the 2015-16 president of AASHTO and was vice chairman of the Transportation Research Board executive committee in 2016.

FHWA, an agency within the U.S. Department of Transportation, supports state and local governments with design, construction and maintenance of the federal highway system.

[Category: Textiles]

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MSTRUCK-5996547 MSTRUCK

Load-Date: September 19, 2017

Trump picks Trombino for federal post; Former Iowa DOT director to head Federal Highway Administration

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, IA)

12 September 2017

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Section: A; Pg. 11

Length: 435 words

Byline: Mitchell Schmidt

Body

President Donald Trump plans to name Paul Trombino II, former director of the Iowa Department of Transportation, to lead the Federal Highway Administration.

A White House news release announced Trump's intentions to nominate Trombino, who headed the DOT from 2011 to 2016.

Trombino, 51, of Johnston, resigned from his Iowa post in November. He did not immediately return calls seeking comment Monday.

The appointment requires approval by the U.S. Senate.

U.S. Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, a member of the Environmental Public Works Committee, endorsed Trombino in a Monday statement that noted a strong and efficient infrastructure is vital to the nation's economy.

"Paul Trombino understands this and is a committed public servant with more than 20 years of experience in updating our infrastructure at the local and statewide level," Ernst said. "As we move ahead on an infrastructure plan, we must ensure that it addresses fixes to roads, bridges, and highways, and also looks at dam and levee infrastructure.

"I look forward to working with Paul on a plan that includes these transportation needs of rural America, and not just major cities."

As Iowa DOT director, Trombino was responsible for the planning, design, construction and operation of 9,400 miles of highways, 4,300 bridges, programs for transit, rail, aviation and motor vehicles, the White House release said.

A Monday statement from Gov. Kim Reynolds' office also touted Trombino's abilities.

"Paul Trombino has a proven track record of being an innovative leader who isn't afraid to solve problems by looking through a new lens," Reynolds said.

Trombino also served as the 2015-16 president of the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials and was vice chairman of the Transportation Research Board Executive Committee in 2016.

After resigning from the Iowa DOT, Trombino was named president of McClure Engineering Co. of Clive, which provides engineering services to clients in the Midwest. A representative with McClure confirmed Monday that Trombino still is with the company.

Trombino worked for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation before coming to Iowa. He holds degrees in civil engineering and economics from the University of Wisconsin.

The Federal Highway Administration, an agency within the U.S. Department of Transportation, supports state and local governments with design, construction and maintenance of the federal highway system.

The Iowa DOT employs more than 2,600 people. The Federal Highway Administration had about 2,800 employees in 2014.

I Comments: (319) 339-3175; mitchell.schmidt@thegazette.com

Graphic

Paul Trombino

Load-Date: September 15, 2017

End of Document

Former Iowa DOT Director Trombino eyed by Trump for federal highway position

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, IA)

11 September 2017

Web Edition

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Section: NEWS

Length: 441 words

Byline: Mitchell Schmidt, THE GAZETTE

Body

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I Comments: (319) 339-3175; mitchell.schmidt@thegazette.com

More stories from Mitchell Schmidt

Load-Date: September 18, 2017

End of Document

Trump to present former Iowa DOT chief for U.S. job; President will nominate Trombino as next head of Federal Highway Administration

Des Moines Register (Iowa)

September 10, 2017 Sunday

1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A13

Length: 474 words

Byline: By, William Petroski, bpetrosk@dmreg.com

Body

Paul Trombino of Johnston, the former director of the Iowa Department of Transportation, will be nominated by President Donald Trump as administrator of the Federal Highway Administration, the White House announced late Friday.

Trombino, 51, headed the Iowa DOT for five years before resigning last November and subsequently becoming president of McClure Engineering of Clive. His appointment comes amid a promise by Trump to rebuild the nation's infrastructure, including work on roads, bridges, subways, airports and other facilities.

Trombino had a key role in 2015 in lobbying the Iowa Legislature for approval of a 10-cent-per-gallon increase in gasoline and diesel fuel taxes to generate about \$200 million annually in additional money for state and local road and bridge construction projects. He also was involved in an initiative in which Iowa is attempting to become one of the first states in the nation to develop a digital driver's license that can be used as an app on smart phones.

Trombino, who came to the Iowa DOT in April 2011 after 17 years with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, has degrees in civil engineering and economics. He finished a term late last year as president of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, a group that promotes an integrated national transportation system.

The U.S. Senate must still confirm Trombino as administrator of the Federal Highway Administration, which is an agency within the U.S. Department of Transportation that supports state and local governments in the design, construction, and maintenance of the nation's highway system and various federally and tribal owned lands. Brandye Hendrickson, a former Indiana Department of Transportation official, is the federal agency's acting administrator.

Former Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad, who became the U.S. ambassador to China in May, offered praise when Trombino announced last year that he was leaving the Iowa DOT to enter the private sector.

"I just know that he has been a great department head and he has done a lot of innovative things," Branstad told The Des Moines Register. "He runs a very efficient operation and we have the most road and bridge projects that we have ever done," Branstad added, referring to a record \$806 million state road construction program planned last year.

At the Iowa DOT, Trombino was responsible for a \$1 billion annual budget, 9,400 miles of Iowa highways and 4,300 bridges. In addition, the DOT operates state programs for transit, rail, and aviation, as well as motor vehicle services and motor carrier services, and it enforces trucking laws. The department has about 2,500 state employees.

Trombino has been replaced as director of the Iowa DOT by Mark Lowe, who previously served as the agency's general counsel and had headed its motor vehicle division.

Graphic

Paul Trombino

Load-Date: September 10, 2017

End of Document

Trump to nominate Paul Trombino III as head of Federal Highway Administration

The Examiner (Washington, DC)

September 9, 2017 Saturday

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Section: POLITICS

Length: 278 words

Byline: Daniel Chaitin

Dateline: Washington, D.C.

Body

FULL TEXT

The Trump administration announced Friday its intention to nominate Paul Trombino III of Wisconsin to be the administrator of the Federal Highway Administration.

Trombino served as the Iowa Department of Transportation from 2011 to 2016, "where he was responsible for the planning, design, construction, and operation of 9,400 miles of highways, 4,300 bridges, the modal programs of transit, rail, aviation, motor vehicle services which included driver and vehicle services, and motor carrier services and enforcement," the White House said in a statement.

A licensed professional engineer in the states of Iowa and Wisconsin, Trombino currently is president of McClure Engineering Company, a civil engineering company focused on transportation, aviation, water, and structures projects. Prior to that he was the president of the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials and vice chair of the Transportation Research Board Executive Committee.

Brandye Hendrickson is the acting administrator of the Federal Highway Administration.

The 2,900 person agency within the Transportation Department "supports State and local governments in the design, construction, and maintenance of the Nation's highway system (Federal Aid Highway Program) and various federally and tribal owned lands (Federal Lands Highway Program)," according to the agency website. "Through financial and technical assistance to State and local governments, the Federal Highway Administration is responsible for ensuring that America's roads and highways continue to be among the safest and most technologically sound in the world."

Credit: Daniel Chaitin, Political Correspondent

Load-Date: May 10, 2021

President Donald J. Trump Announces Key Additions to his Administration

Newstex Blogs

The White House Press Office

September 9, 2017 Saturday 12:13 AM EST

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Length: 609 words

Body

Sep 08, 2017(The White House Press Office: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-and-releases> Delivered by Newstex) President Donald J. Trump Announces Intent to Nominate Personnel to Key Administration Posts President Donald J. Trump today announced his intent to nominate the following individuals to key positions in his Administration: Howard R. Elliott of Indiana to be Administrator of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Department of Transportation. Mr. Elliott is a forty-year veteran of the U.S. freight rail industry, serving over the last decade as group Vice President of Public Safety, Health, Environment and Security for CSX Transportation in Jacksonville, FL.

His portfolio of responsibility included hazardous materials transportation safety, homeland security, railroad policing, crisis management, environmental compliance and operations, occupational health management and continuity of business operations. He is a pioneer and leading advocate in developing and implementing computer-based tools to assist emergency management officials, first responders, and homeland security personnel in preparing for and responding to a railroad hazardous materials or security incident. He is a recipient of the Association of American Railroads prestigious Holden-Proefrock Award for lifetime achievement in hazardous materials transportation safety. He is a graduate of Columbia Southern University and Indiana University, where he received the first ever Distinguished Alumni Award from the Department of Criminal Justice and is a current member of the IU College of Arts and Sciences Executive Dean's Advisory Committee. Paul Trombino III of Wisconsin to be the Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation. Mr. Trombino is currently the President of McClure Engineering Company, a civil engineering company focused on transportation, aviation, water, and structures projects. Mr. Trombino served as the Director of the Iowa Department of Transportation from 2011 to 2016, where he was responsible for the planning, design, construction, and operation of 9,400 miles of highways, 4,300 bridges, the modal programs of transit, rail, aviation, motor vehicle services which included driver and vehicle services, and motor carrier services and enforcement. Mr. Trombino served as the 2015-2016 President of the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials and as the 2016 Vice-Chair of the Transportation Research Board Executive Committee. Mr. Trombino has a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and bachelor of science degree in economics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is a licensed professional engineer in the states of Iowa and Wisconsin. ____ President Donald J. Trump Announces Nomination of William Wehrum to the Environmental Protection Agency William L. Wehrum of Delaware will serve as Assistant Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, Air and Radiation. Mr. Wehrum is a partner and the head of the Administrative Law Group at Hunton ...lliams. Mr. Wehrum's practice focuses on air quality issues including regulatory development and related litigation, compliance counseling and enforcement defense, legislative advice, and permitting. Prior to joining Hunton ...lliams, Mr. Wehrum served for two years as Acting Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. He has a B.S. in chemical

engineering from Purdue University and a J.D. from Widener University. Mr. Wehrum is a member of the District of Columbia bar.

Load-Date: September 9, 2017

End of Document

Mannheimer joins McClure Engineering

Sioux City Journal (Iowa)

March 19, 2017 Sunday

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Section: LOCAL

Length: 88 words

Byline: Ty Rushing

Body

CLIVE, Iowa -- Zachary Mannheimer will join McClure Engineering Co., a Clive-based Civil Engineering firm, to bring a focus on community planning and economic development in-house.

Mannheimer, former executive director and founder of the Des Moines Social Club, will begin his new position at McClure on March 20 working directly with McClure president Paul Trombino III, former director of the Iowa Department of Transportation.

McClure has seven offices in Iowa, including in Sioux City and Spencer, and three locations in Missouri.

Load-Date: March 19, 2017

End of Document

Collective bargaining, education funding top week

Des Moines Register (Iowa)

February 15, 2017 Wednesday

1 Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. M13

Length: 590 words

Body

We are just wrapping up business for week 5 of the 87th General Assembly.

Some days are kind of what I think is normal for being here, and some days it seems as if we are just spinning our wheels. There are quite a number of bills that need to be filled and read in so they can be dispensed with. The first funnel is date is only four weeks away. In order to make it past the first funnel, a bill has to have been through subcommittee and committee in order to stay active.

Right now we are approximately 10 days behind (I think) where we normally are because of the time it took to resolve the budget imbalance. Now, as we discuss (FY2017) budgets we have to take into account the minor lack of revenue to balance the 2017 budget.

Monday (Feb. 6) we passed the education funding bill which allows an increase of \$40 million for FY 2018. It is not as much as many people wanted, but with the new revenue somewhere in the \$200 million range, in order to fund our other budgets with salary adjustments that are built in, this is the amount that the Appropriations committee decided was available. I have heard that one of the things that we are supposed to be doing is bringing flexibility into our local schools for spending, but I have not quite figured out what we are doing. By this time next week we should have some of these communication problems worked out.

Wednesday (Feb. 8) afternoon I visited with the Associated General Contractors leadership class and I help them get a picture in the House Chamber. These are young people that are learning to become leaders both in the Contractors Organization and the businesses they work for. Association General Contractors (AGC) is an organization that represents highway construction contractors, insurance companies, material suppliers, and bonding companies. This group is very active politically because they have invested interest in keeping Iowa's roads in good condition.

Thursday morning (Feb. 9) we passed a bill that proposes that the Iowa DOT, Iowa's counties, and cities trade federal highway funds between groups. The idea being that with federal aid, comes extra rules and specifications. The bill was proposed by former DOT director Paul Trombino as a way to make county and city road funding stretch farther. The Iowa DOT has the necessary inspectors and support staff to handle these federal road projects in a more efficient manner. It passed on a party line vote due to the nature of the pre-determined wage in federal projects. Since the same amount of federal aid will be coming to Iowa, there should be little change in the total wages and salaries in the state of Iowa, it simply relieves some of the extra work load from counties and cities, and gives it to IDOT.

The next item that we are going to approach next week is the collective bargaining bill. This is a particularly controversial bill, in that it will change collective bargaining for public workers slightly. House Leadership feels that it is time to look at this since it has been over 40 years since there have been changes. Things I know about the bill is:

The bill does not affect private sector unions and it does not repeal the right to collective bargaining for public employees.

The bill does not affect pensions, which have never been a part of collective bargaining.

It does not take away health insurance; the state is required to provide a health insurance plan to employees.

The bill does not mandate that local governments much join a statewide health insurance pool.

legislative news

rep. david maxwell

Load-Date: February 15, 2017

End of Document

Troy Jerman, P.E. Joins McClure Engineering Co. as Vice President

Plus Company Updates(PCU)

January 27, 2017 Friday

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Length: 274 words

Dateline: New York

Body

Clive: McClure Engineering Company has issued the following news release:

Moving people and commerce safely and efficiently is the goal of any transportation system, but an Iowa-based civil engineering firm is taking their team to the next level with a key hire in transportation.

McClure Engineering Company announced today that Troy Jerman, P.E. will join the company's Clive, Iowa office as Vice President of Transportation, a strategic move to strengthen the company as a leader in transportation engineering services. This move follows the announcement of former Iowa Department of Transportation Director, Paul Trombino III, joining the firm as President earlier this month.

"Troy is an excellent fit for McClure Engineering Company as he embodies our core values and has focused his career on building strong communities in Iowa," said Trombino. "Troy's exceptional leadership and communication skills will be a great asset to MEC and the transportation group."

Jerman received his Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Iowa State University, and spent over twenty years with the Iowa Department of Transportation including almost five years as District Engineer for District 4 in Atlantic, Iowa.

“Transportation is the driving force for state economies helping communities grow and connect to the world,” said Jerman. “I look forward to joining McClure Engineering Company and being a part of the talented team dedicated to building relationships which bring smart and innovative outcomes for communities.”

In case of any query regarding this article or other content needs please contact: editorial@plusmediasolutions.com

Load-Date: January 30, 2017

End of Document

Ex-DOT director lands job in private sector

Des Moines Register (Iowa)

December 24, 2016 Saturday

1 Edition

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Section: BUSINESS; Pg. D6

Length: 307 words

Byline: By, The Des Moines Register

Body

Paul Trombino, the former director of the Iowa Department of Transportation, has been named the next president of McClure Engineering Co., effective Jan. 3, according to a company statement.

The move will position McClure as a leader in transportation economics for the Midwest, the company, based in Clive, said. Terry Lutz, who has been president of the company since 1985, will continue as CEO and chairman of the board. "Paul has brought a vision to our state focused on economic development by leveraging freight movement, specifically leading the development of freight commodity data," Lutz said in a statement. "His vision and thought process align perfectly with our culture at McClure Engineering Co."

Trombino was director of the Iowa Department of Transportation the past five years before he unexpectedly resigned his \$147,000-a-year post last month.

Trombino, 50, helped to secure legislative approval of a state gasoline tax increase in 2015. He told the Register in November that he had been talking with his family about making a job switch for months. "Transportation economics have a broad application for helping communities and the states of the Midwest," Trombino said in McClure's statement announcing his position. "I am looking forward to working with such a talented group of engineering professionals who wake up every day thinking 'How can we help our clients build better infrastructure for the future?'"

McClure was founded in 1956 and provides professional civil engineering services to public and private clients. In the past year, approximately 80 percent of its business has been in the public sector, with 40 percent of that focusing on transportation-related projects, according to the company.

McClure has 10 offices throughout Iowa and Missouri and is working in 35 states throughout the country, the company said.

Load-Date: December 24, 2016

End of Document

Ex-Iowa DOT chief to lead engineering company

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, IA)

22 December 2016

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Section: A; Pg. 5

Length: 148 words

Byline: Mitchell Schmidt

Body

Former Iowa Department of Transportation Director **Paul Trombino** III is the new president of McClure Engineering Co.

The Clive-based company announced his hiring Wednesday. He begins his new role Jan. 3.

"Transportation economics have a broad application for helping communities and the states of the Midwest," **Trombino** said in a news release.

In November, **Trombino** announced his departure from Iowa DOT after nearly six years as its leader. Gov. Terry Branstad appointed **Trombino** Iowa DOT director in May 2011, and he was confirmed by the Iowa Senate that June. At the time of his departure, **Trombino** said he did not have specific work plans.

Branstad has named Mark Lowe, who had been director of Iowa DOT's Motor Vehicle Division since 2009, as the department's interim director. A permanent replacement for director is planned.

I Comments: (319) 339-3175; mitchell.schmidt@thegazette.com

Graphic

Paul Trombino III

Load-Date: December 23, 2016

End of Document

Cross: Ghouls, goblins and driverless combines, oh my!

Globe Gazette (Mason City, Iowa)

October 26, 2016 Wednesday

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Section: EDITORIALS

Length: 623 words

Byline: Staff Writer

Body

It appears that fall is here – at least by the look of my yard – with winter not too far behind.

The warm days were great while they lasted, but I don't believe we're going to have too many more of them.

There's nothing like a walk on a cool, clear night in North Iowa. We have so many great trails to walk, enjoying all the fall colors.

Throw in a bonfire, some hot dogs, marshmallows, graham crackers and chocolate bars and you have a recipe for a great evening. Oh, and don't forget the hot apple cider.

It's around this time of the year my wife's family has their annual fall picnic. It always includes the bonfire but also includes a hayrack ride. The ride is usually pretty chilly, but it is still a lot of fun.

Along with the fun also comes a little bit of work around the farm – driving a tractor in the field or to the elevator. Harvest is truly a family event in North Iowa.

Speaking of harvest, we can't forget to pay attention to the traffic on the roads, especially at night with farm machinery being moved from field to field.

Combine that traffic with the regular school bus traffic and deer on the move from fields being harvested, you really need to pay attention.

I recently spoke with someone who got a ticket and probation for passing a stopped school bus.

Although they didn't really say what happened, I'm pretty certain they were not paying attention, in a hurry or simply distracted.

Fortunately for them, they didn't hit a child. They could have been facing much more than probation.

When will we just pay attention to our surroundings?

Bottom line, there is no reason to be in that big of a hurry unless it is a matter of life or death. At that point, I hope we would call 9-1-1 for assistance.

I had the opportunity to hear the Director of the Iowa Department of Transportation speak last week. His name is Paul Trombino. Wow, what a speaker.

I have to admit – I thought to myself, with a tone of sarcasm, "How exciting can a speech be about transportation in Iowa?" The answer – it can be very exciting after you listen to him speak.

I never knew how far advanced the state of Iowa was when it came to automated transportation being a reality in our state.

What was most surprising and shocking to hear was that this spring we could see driverless freight trucks on the road between Cedar Falls and Cedar Rapids.

It sounded very promising in helping to manage costs of transporting commodities out of our state to other parts of the country.

Also, a lot of the advancement occurring in the area of automated transportation is taking place right here in Iowa.

He even mentioned we could soon see driverless combines. Wouldn't that be a sight to see driving down the road in Mitchell County.

We are on the cutting edge of some major advancements. Stay tuned.

With Halloween quickly approaching, I thought I would share a fun and not-so-well-known holiday observed on Oct. 30 – Haunted Refrigerator Day.

Are you afraid of those things lurking in the darkness of your refrigerator? You probably should be afraid...very afraid. Take this opportunity on the night before Halloween to face your fridge demons.

What a fun way to deal with a not-so-fun task – cleaning out the refrigerator. Maybe you will find some great memories back there in the dark corners.

The second Halloween holiday actually happens on Oct. 31 – "Books for Treats" Day.

The day is just as it sounds – instead of giving out needless candy, how about giving away a book?

Nowadays, books have become cheap and inexpensive, especially when it comes to many children's books. Look around for the bargains throughout the year and have them ready to hand out at Halloween. Give it a try – it could be a lot of fun.

Jim Cross, Editor, Press-News

Load-Date: October 27, 2016

End of Document

Iowa DOT Motor Vehicle Enforcement receives national award

US Official News

October 8, 2016 Saturday

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Length: 247 words

Dateline: New York

Body

Des Moines: Iowa Department of Transportation has issued the following news release:

For the third consecutive year, the Iowa Department of Transportation's Office of Motor Vehicle Enforcement was tops in the nation for safety enforcement as determined by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. The agency also received an honorable mention for safety enforcement improvement.

These awards were presented to MVE Chief David Lorenzen at the fall Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance conference Sept. 19 in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Iowa was presented with the Safety Enforcement Award. The award recognizes the most productive and focused safety enforcement programs in fiscal year 2015 in terms of cost efficiency, traffic enforcement, and data quality. Specifically noted were Iowa MVE's:

Average cost per vehicle inspection.

Efficiency of the operation.

Quality of reporting traffic enforcement violations.

The Safety Enforcement Improvement Honorable Mention recognizes the states with the greatest improvements to their safety enforcement programs.

Iowa Department of Transportation Director Paul Trombino III said of the awards, "This shows the incredible work accomplished by our motor vehicle enforcement staff. Thank you so much for your work each day focused on improving safety, mobility, and the economics of the state of Iowa."

In case of any query regarding this article or other content needs please contact: editorial@plusmediasolutions.com

Load-Date: October 8, 2016

End of Document

Comments are sent ahead of the comment deadline tonight

US Official News

July 21, 2016 Thursday

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Length: 419 words

Dateline: New York

Body

Des Moines: Department of Agriculture, The State of Iowa has issued the following news release:

Iowa Gov. Terry E. Branstad, Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds, Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey, Director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority Debi Durham, Director of the Iowa Department of Transportation Paul Trombino and Director of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Chuck Gipp today sent a letter to President Obama and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Gina McCarthy encouraging the administration to revise their ill-advised proposed rule on the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) and submitted comments to the EPA in support of a robust RFS. The comment period ends at 11:59 p.m. ET tonight. Iowans interested in commenting on the proposed rule can do so here.

In the letter to Obama and McCarthy, Iowa leaders say, "We write once again to strongly encourage you to revise and increase the proposed U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS) volume obligation levels closer to congressionally authorized levels in order to grow the production and use of renewable fuels and revitalize the economy in rural America. We have grown increasingly frustrated by the Federal Government's weakening support for renewable transportation fuels. We hope that our comments and those of the biofuels industry are considered fully in your final deliberations. Our concerns, at their simplest level, center on the fact that the Clean Air Act does not give the EPA the authority to issue a general waiver of the Renewable Fuel Standard in this situation. The law makes it clear that the EPA may only issue a general waiver based on a determination that there is "an inadequate domestic supply" and not on other grounds such as distribution capacity.

[…]

“Iowa leaders have continued to actively engage on this issue, which is so important to a healthy economy in rural America. There remains a strong consensus in the Heartland that the EPA needs to reverse course on their once again flawed proposal and reject Big Oil’s counterproductive arguments. The use of biofuels in the Midwest has continued to grow, and we are confident that this trend can extend nationally. The RFS as enacted, was one of the best recent examples of a federal policy success, because of the policy predictability it provided to nurture growth and innovation.”

In case of any query regarding this article or other content needs please contact: editorial@plusmediasolutions.com

Load-Date: July 22, 2016

End of Document

Iowa leaders send letter to President Obama, EPA Administrator McCarthy on proposed RFS rule

US Official News

July 15, 2016 Friday

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Length: 772 words

Dateline: New York

Body

Des Moines: Department of Agriculture, The State of Iowa has issued the following news release:

Iowa Gov. Terry E. Branstad, Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds, Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey, Director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority Debi Durham, Director of the Iowa Department of Transportation Paul Trombino and Director of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Chuck Gipp today sent a letter to President Obama and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Gina McCarthy encouraging the administration to revise their ill-advised proposed rule on the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) and submitted comments to the EPA in support of a robust RFS. The comment period ends at 11:59 p.m. ET tonight. Iowans interested in commenting on the proposed rule can do so here.

In the letter to Obama and McCarthy, Iowa leaders say, "We write once again to strongly encourage you to revise and increase the proposed U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS) volume obligation levels closer to congressionally authorized levels in order to grow the production and use of renewable fuels and revitalize the economy in rural America. We have grown increasingly frustrated by the Federal Government's weakening support for renewable transportation fuels. We hope that our comments and those of the biofuels industry are considered fully in your final deliberations. Our concerns, at their simplest level, center on the fact that the Clean Air Act does not give the EPA the authority to issue a general waiver of the Renewable Fuel Standard in this situation. The law makes it clear that the EPA may only issue a general waiver based on a determination that there is "an inadequate domestic supply" and not on other grounds such as distribution capacity.

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“Iowa leaders have continued to actively engage on this issue, which is so important to a healthy economy in rural America. There remains a strong consensus in the Heartland that the EPA needs to reverse course on their once again flawed proposal and reject Big Oil’s counterproductive arguments. The use of biofuels in the Midwest has continued to grow, and we are confident that this trend can extend nationally. The RFS as enacted, was one of the best recent examples of a federal policy success, because of the policy predictability it provided to nurture growth and innovation.”

The full letter can be read [here](#).

###

Highlights of Iowa leaders’ engagement on the RFS include:

State and Federal elected officials, including Gov. Branstad and Lt. Governor Reynolds, participated in a “Defend the RFS” event.

Gov. Branstad traveled to Washington, DC, joining a group of Iowa farmers and biofuels producers, to testify at the Federal government’s only public hearing and met with EPA Administrator McCarthy.

Gov. Branstad, Lt. Gov. Reynolds, Secretary Bill Northey and the entire Iowa congressional delegation sent a joint letter to Federal leaders advocating for the many benefits that flow from the RFS.

Gov. Terry Branstad and Gov. Mark Dayton (D-Minn.) penned an op-ed in support of a strong Renewable Fuel Standard.

Gov. Terry Branstad brought together a bipartisan group of six governors to sign on to a letter to President Barack Obama, EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy and United States Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack expressing their support for a strong RFS.

Leaders from across the Midwest joined Gov. Branstad and Lt. Gov. Reynolds for their “Hearing in Heartland,” which was open to all interested citizens; 83 panelists from across the Midwest Region spoke from the heart about the importance of the RFS to their livelihoods and a healthy rural economy while only two individuals expressed opposition to a robust RFS.

Gov. Branstad, in his Condition of the State address, called on the Iowa Legislature to pass a resolution in support of a robust RFS. The Legislature unanimously passed bicameral, bipartisan resolutions calling for the EPA to reverse course and support a strong RFS. View the resolutions: [House Resolution 101](#) | [Senate Resolution 101](#)

State of Iowa leaders submitted formal comments to the EPA with current data and analysis that provides Federal leaders the opportunity and obligation to revise their initial volume obligations upward.

Gov. Branstad and Sec. Northey testify in support of a robust RFS before the EPA’s hearing in Kansas City.

Lt. Gov. Reynolds submits written testimony to the EPA in support of a robust RFS.

In case of any query regarding this article or other content needs please contact: editorial@plusmediasolutions.com

Load-Date: July 15, 2016

End of Document

Branstad, Reynolds announce Iowa awarded more than \$25 million for Intermodal Transportation Facility in Cedar Rapids

US Official News

July 9, 2016 Saturday

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Length: 628 words

Dateline: New York

Body

Des Moines: Iowa Department of Transportation has issued the following news release:

Today, Gov. Terry Branstad and Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds announced that the Iowa Department of Transportation has been awarded \$25,650,000 to build a full service intermodal facility in Cedar Rapids.

The federal funds will come to the state under the newly established Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies (FASTLANE) grant program. This program, created by the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, is being used to fund critical freight and highway projects across the country. The grant will partially cover the \$46.5 million cost of the project. Nearly \$21 million of the project will be funded by private partners, led by Alliant Energy Transportation.

The state of Iowa is located between freight centers in Chicago, Kansas City, and Minneapolis, yet lacks adequate intermodal service which helps facilitate easy transition of freight between different modes of transportation. The Cedar Rapids project will construct integrated facilities for a container intermodal terminal; a rail-to-truck transload facility for bulk commodities; and a cross-dock facility for consolidating and redistributing truck loads, as well as loading and unloading containers. It will provide Iowa and surrounding states with access to a high capacity, efficient, and cost-competitive facility to move goods from truck to rail and vice versa, generating significant mobility, reliability, and economic outcomes.

Iowa DOT Director **Paul Trombino** III hailed the grant as the next step toward a more connected transportation system. “The facility directly aligns with the highest priority strategy set forth in Iowa’s recently developed State Freight Plan. The facility will optimize the freight transportation network, minimizing costs and travel time and improving supply chain efficiency. This will enhance the state’s economic development efforts, something we’ve been working on in conjunction with the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA).”

“This statewide initiative will provide long-term benefits to eastern Iowa. As a first-of-its-kind facility, it will serve an unmet need for cross-dock, transload and intermodal services,” said Alliant Energy Transportation President, Kevin Burke. “We’re grateful to our partners at the Iowa DOT and IEDA, whose support was instrumental in receiving this significant funding. We’re excited to be a part of this collaborative opportunity that will create jobs and lower transportation costs for Iowa businesses.”

“We’re delighted that the U.S. Department of Transportation recognizes the value in constructing a new intermodal facility in Cedar Rapids,” said Gov. Terry Branstad. “This high capacity, efficient and cost-competitive facility will provide farmers and businesses in our state additional resources to move our Iowa goods from truck to rail and vice versa. I want to thank our state leaders at the Iowa DOT and IEDA along with private sector partners for their work on this project. I also want to thank Senators Grassley and Ernst, and Congressmen Blum and Loebsack for their active support of this project.”

Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds added, “As Iowa looks to the future in how we transport our world-class goods and products to market, this new facility will improve the energy efficiency and reliability of intermodal freight generating positive economic outcomes for Iowa farmers and businesses. We’re thrilled that this facility will be constructed in Cedar Rapids as this is a ripe part of our state for future economic growth.”

In case of any query regarding this article or other content needs please contact: editorial@plusmediasolutions.com

Load-Date: July 10, 2016

End of Document

Iowa Ahead of the Nation in Futuristic, Driverless-Vehicle Technology

NBC - 13 WHO (Des Moines, Iowa)

May 11, 2016 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS

Length: 387 words

Byline: Lynn Melling

Body

DES MOINES, Iowa -- New technology is pushing the latest model cars in directions never thought possible outside of science fiction.

But, the latest vehicle models are moving closer and closer to being able to drive without you behind the wheel, thanks to the state of Iowa.

The 2016 Volvo X-C-90 features an inline four-cylinder turbocharged engine that offers 250 horsepower and 258-foot pounds of torque.

It can drive on its own and it can parallel park itself.

"These little buttons that you see around the car use sound. So ultra-sonic," said Dr. Daniel McGehee. He emphasizes it is a semi-autonomous vehicle.

"These technologies are not quite to the driverless mode. But if you drift out of the lane, for instance, it will correct your lane position and put you back in the lane," he said.

McGehee is a vehicle safety researcher at the University of Iowa, which is one of only a handful of institutions in the world developing safety technology that will eventually put driverless vehicles on the roads.

"Over the last 10 years, we've started to connect the dots between a number of technologies," McGehee said.

So what's the missing dot?

"The key to all of this is the kinds of mapping," McGehee said.

Mapping the roads, and it's about to start happening in Iowa.

"A high-definition map is mapping the system or segments of the road to the centimeter level. We're focused on the corridors between Cedar Rapids and Iowa City," said Paul Trombino, director of the Iowa Department of Transportation.

"It's a new approach that isn't happening anywhere in the United States, and we're pretty excited about that. We think it offers a lot of economic development opportunities," Trombino said.

He says automated vehicles will be safer since human error causes the most crashes, and they're going to be here soon.

"It's not going to be this nice, smooth evolutionary path because there are so many technology companies interested in transportation, especially in vehicle technology. But I think it's going to come quick," Trombino said.

It's an evolution being steered, in part, by Iowa with the University of Iowa in the driver's seat, and the DOT paving the way.

Right now, the DOT is in the process of finalizing a contract to map roads between Cedar Rapids and Iowa City.

The project could be complete as soon as next summer.

Load-Date: May 12, 2016

End of Document

FHWA Issues Remarks at Beyond Traffic Freight Roundtable

Targeted News Service

February 9, 2016 Tuesday 4:33 AM EST

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Length: 915 words

Byline: Targeted News Service

Dateline: ATLANTA

Body

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration issued the following remarks by Administrator Gregory Nadeau at the Beyond Traffic Freight Roundtable:

"Hello, everyone, and welcome. I appreciate everyone taking the time to join us for the first in a series of freight roundtables we'll be holding across the country.

"We came here to Atlanta to listen to you and learn from you.

"As the people on the frontlines of manufacturing, shipping and government your insights are very important to us.

"Delivering transportation infrastructure to the American people is - by law and in practice - a partnership assisted by the federal government and administered by the states.

"So I'd like to acknowledge our partners here today - GDOT Commissioner Russell McMurphy and Daniel Studdard, Senior Planner with the Atlanta Regional Commission.

"I'd like to get things started by offering a little context in the form of a quote. Here it is:

"Our system of transportation is the greatest in the world. But we must face facts. We must have the courage to let our people know that our system is no longer adequate."

"Who do you think said that?

"It sounds a lot like what our Transportation Secretary, Anthony Foxx, has been saying as he's traveled across the country.

"Maybe some of you have said something similar.

"But those are actually the words of President Lyndon Johnson as he signed the bill creating the US Department of Transportation 50 years ago this fall.

"The Department is going to be celebrating this anniversary throughout the year and highlighting the work it's done - along with our state and local partners - to give America a world-class transportation system.

"But we also need to do as President Johnson suggested. We need to face the facts.

"We need to better understand and better communicate the important role transportation investment - especially in our freight infrastructure -- plays in the economic development of this region, this state and the nation as a whole.

"The Atlanta region has the 7th highest freight volume among major US markets. More than 80 percent of that freight moves by truck - well above the national average.

"We also know that freight is a tremendous economic driver - accounting for more than 100,000 direct jobs here in the Atlanta region.

"Those numbers represent what I call the "freight economy."

"But the freight economy can't thrive unless it's supported by a strong network of roads, rails, ports, airports and other infrastructure.

"And so I believe the most important transportation investment we can make is one that supports the freight economy and the jobs it creates.

"One of the real forward thinkers on this subject is the president of AASHTO, **Paul Trombino**, the Director of Transportation for the state of Iowa.

"Paul has become a leading voice in explaining why directing investment to our freight infrastructure is so important.

"It goes beyond the obvious - creating jobs on project sites - to encompass the larger idea that a robust freight infrastructure helps companies reduce operating costs, improve efficiency, increase competitiveness and create jobs.

"While we're facing facts, here's one more to consider.

"For all the trucks moving freight in the Atlanta region today, there may be three times more in 2040.

"That's similar to what we project on a national level in a report we issued last year called Beyond Traffic, which sees the country being home to 70 million more people and moving 45 percent more freight by 2045.

"Those numbers present us with two choices.

"We can harness the power of more people and more freight so it's a boon to our economy, creating opportunity and prosperity for our children and grandchildren.

"Or we can fail to respond, turning the increased demand into a chokepoint that undermines our quality of life.

"Meeting the challenge won't be cheap.

"Today, our nation has more than \$860 billion in un-met bridge and highway needs.

"One of those "un-met needs" is south of here along I-75 between McDonough and Macon.

"The addition of two designated truck lanes along that corridor would help improve safety and mobility for everyone on the road and help the growing number of trucks move more efficiently - making Georgia businesses more competitive.

"It's in the state's ten-year major mobility investment plan. But all the funds have not been identified.

"And so as a nation we'll need to step up our long-term investment and be strategic in where and how we target our resources.

"And we'll need to put innovation to work so we get the greatest value for every dollar and to help ensure that trucks and cars can share the roads safely.

"That's why we're so pleased you could join us.

"We need your input into how to focus our investments so they help the system perform better and create what Secretary Foxx calls Ladders of Opportunity.

"The Ladders philosophy is at the heart of everything we do. It reminds us that transportation is the connection between people and their jobs, their school, their doctor.

"And it's the connection between goods and the people who buy them.

"And so we look forward to hearing from you and the people we'll be meeting at roundtables all across the country on how we can build those Ladders.

"We're going to take what we learn and synthesize it into something that will be useful to all communities as they plan for the future.

"Again, thank you for taking the time to join us. I look forward to our discussion."

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EditorVail-5466046 EditorVail

Load-Date: March 21, 2016

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Federal highway bill a relief for Iowa DOT; Officials praise return of 'stability' when funding projects

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, IA)

14 December 2015

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Section: A; Pg. 7

Length: 537 words

Byline: B.A. Morelli

Body

Iowa's transportation chief praised the recent passage of a long-term federal highway bill, calling it the first substantive transportation legislation since Congress dropped earmarks in 2011.

The five-year, \$305 billion Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act is the first long-term transportation plan since a 2005 law expired six years ago. President Barack Obama signed the measure Dec. 4, hours before funding was to expire.

"It's a very good thing for the state of Iowa, and all states, and cities as well," Iowa Department of Transportation Director **Paul Trombino** III said Tuesday during a meeting of the Iowa Transportation Commission. "We are looking forward to getting through the details and letting cities and counties know about what they can expect over the next five years."

At the monthly meeting in Ames, the commission also approved more than \$1.9 million for five intercity bus programs next year, \$9.3 million for 44 projects from Iowa's Traffic Safety Improvement Program, and \$5.5 million for 60 new transit vehicles to replace old buses.

Since 2009, federal spending authorizations covering months instead of years has left planners at all levels guessing whether money for road and bridge work would run out.

Iowa has a measured risk approach to planning, with an assumption of flat funding at \$309 million, to keep moving on long-term projects, such as the Highway 100 extension in Cedar Rapids.

The new highway bill should boost Iowa's federal funding initially by about 5 percent — from about \$475 million in fiscal 2015 to \$500 million in fiscal 2016 — and 2.5 percent per year thereafter, said Stuart Anderson, Iowa DOT director of planning, programming and modal division.

The Iowa DOT keeps about two-thirds of the money, while the remainder funnels to cities and counties through regional planning organizations.

"The most important thing about this bill is the stability and insurance it provides that consistent funding levels will be there," Anderson said. "There's been lots of challenges for state and local jurisdictions around the country developing projects and not knowing money is going to be there."

Trombino, who also is president of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, said the bill distributes more than 90 percent of federal highway funding to state transportation departments. It also includes “important environmental streamlining provisions” and makes freight transportation a focus, as it has been in Iowa as part of an economic development initiative.

In other news:

I \$170,000 is earmarked in Iowa’s safety program for increasing the left turn lane for southbound Highway 61 to southbound Coonhunter’s Road and adding a right-turn lane for northbound Highway 61 to southbound Coonhunter’s Road near Blue Grass.

I \$500,000 is earmarked in the safety program to construct a single-lane roundabout on Kirkwood Boulevard in Cedar Rapids.

I \$100,000 of a \$450,000 request is earmarked in the safety program to remove the guardrail and asphalt paved shoulder in favor of a 10-foot-wide by 10-inch-thick concrete shoulder and a concrete barrier at Highway 151/Highway 13/Highway 30.

I Comments: (319) 339-3177; brian.morelli@thegazette.com

Graphic

Paul Trombino Iowa DOT

Load-Date: December 22, 2015

End of Document

Final Piece of US 20 Four-Lane Highway To Be Finished by 2018

NBC - 13 WHO (Des Moines, Iowa)

November 17, 2015 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS

Length: 245 words

Byline: Roger Riley

Body

FORT DODGE, Iowa- Tuesday the Iowa Department of Transportation, along with Governor Terry Branstad, and Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds kicked off the "Final Forty" project to pave a four lane road over the last 40 miles of Highway 20, which is still two lane. The stretch runs from west of Early, to Merville.

"The project was made possible by the Iowa Legislature voting to increase the gas tax during last session," said Governor Terry Branstad. "It took effect March 1, cities counties and the state were able to move up a number of projects, this being one of them."

The construction will take place over the next three years at a total cost over \$240 million dollars.

The money has jumped DOT Construction and right-of-way funding from \$17 million in 2015, to \$183 million in fiscal year 2016.

"We worked hard, we had a lot of meetings, a lot of discussions, and we were able to gain the bi-partisan commitment to preserve, and enhance our state's infrastructure," said Governor Branstad.

State transportation officials and the Governor were on hand to kick off the last stretch of the four lane Highway 20, which was started as a 4 lane, back in the 1950's.

"I think this is terrific we finally end up with a second 4 lane east west road across the state of Iowa, " said Shirley Phillips, President of the US 20 Association. "Not only for economic development, but for safety."

The entire 4 lane Highway 20 project is expected to be completed in 2018.

42.459011 -94.198023

Graphic

Governor Terry Branstad, Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds, and DOT Director **Paul Trombino** place the last piece of the Highway 20 4 lane on a map. (Roger Riley WHO-HD)

AASHTO Board Elects Iowa's Paul Trombino President and Maine's David Bernhardt VP elects ...

Association, Organization and Government News

October 5, 2015 Monday 1:07 PM EST

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Length: 660 words

Body

Oct 05, 2015(Association, Organization and Government News: Delivered by Newstex) <nl/> CHICAGO - The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials board of directors today elected Iowa Department of Transportation Director Paul Trombino, III, association president. David Bernhardt, P.E., commissioner of the Maine Department of Transportation, was elected vice president.<nl/><nl/>"I've spent more than two decades in transportation; this ranks at the top of my list of extraordinary moments and I approach it with great humility," said AASHTO President Paul Trombino.

"I am deeply honored to be selected by the AASHTO board of directors to serve in this national leadership role."<nl/><nl/>While he plans to continue pursuing AASHTO's policy priorities - including Congressional action on a new surface transportation bill - Trombino will primarily focus his time as president on ensuring AASHTO is well positioned to serve its member departments. Trombino said his primary emphasis will be on implementing AASHTO's new strategic plan, including completing a thorough review of the association's committee structure.<nl/><nl/>"Transportation powers the creation of wealth across the United States, unleashing opportunity for economic activity and quality of life," said Trombino. "AASHTO has served its members well for 100 years, and it is important that the organization continue to adapt to ensure it can serve its evolving membership."<nl/><nl/>Appointed Director of the Iowa Department of Transportation in May 2011, Trombino is responsible for a \$1 billion annual budget, approximately 3,000 employees, 9,400 miles of highways and 4,300 bridges. The state's modal programs of transit, rail, and air as well as motor vehicle services, motor carrier services, and enforcement departments also fall under the agency's umbrella.<nl/><nl/>Trombino is a member of the AASHTO executive committee and Chair of the AASHTO Subcommittee on Transportation Communications. Prior to joining Iowa DOT, Trombino worked at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for 17 years holding several positions, including operations director of the highway division and director of the Bureau of Transit, Local Roads, Rails and Harbors. Trombino also spent four years in the finance and banking industry in Chicago and Washington, D.C. Trombino earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.<nl/><nl/>AASHTO Vice President David Bernhardt, P.E., was appointed commissioner of the Maine Department of Transportation in February 2011. Commissioner Bernhardt joined the Maine Department of Transportation in 1984 and has held several positions at the department over the years. Immediately prior to his becoming Commissioner, Bernhardt served as Maine DOT's Director of Engineering and Operations. Commissioner Bernhardt is a 1984 graduate of the University of Maine at Orono, where he earned Associate's and Bachelor of Science degrees in Civil Engineering.<nl/><nl/>The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) represents State Departments of Transportation in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. AASHTO is a nonprofit, nonpartisan association serving as a catalyst for excellence in transportation. Follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/aashtospeaks>[1].<nl/><nl/>Update your subscriptions, modify your password or email address, or stop subscriptions at any time on your Subscriber

Preferences Page. You will need to use your email address to log in. If you have questions or problems with the subscription service, please contact subscriberhelp.govdelivery.com.<nl/><nl/>This service is provided to you at no charge by American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).<nl/> [1]: <http://twitter.com/aashtospeaks>

Load-Date: October 5, 2015

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AASHTO Board Elects Iowa's Paul Trombino President and Maine's David Bernhardt VP

Targeted News Service

September 28, 2015 Monday 3:51 AM EST

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Length: 535 words

Byline: Targeted News Service

Dateline: CHICAGO

Body

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation issued the following news release:

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials board of directors today elected Iowa Department of Transportation Director Paul Trombino, III, association president. David Bernhardt, P.E., commissioner of the Maine Department of Transportation, was elected vice president.

"I've spent more than two decades in transportation; this ranks at the top of my list of extraordinary moments and I approach it with great humility," said AASHTO President Paul Trombino. "I am deeply honored to be selected by the AASHTO board of directors to serve in this national leadership role."

While he plans to continue pursuing AASHTO's policy priorities - including Congressional action on a new surface transportation bill - Trombino will primarily focus his time as president on ensuring AASHTO is well positioned to serve its member departments. Trombino said his primary emphasis will be on implementing AASHTO's new strategic plan, including completing a thorough review of the association's committee structure.

"Transportation powers the creation of wealth across the United States, unleashing opportunity for economic activity and quality of life," said Trombino. "AASHTO has served its members well for 100 years, and it is important that the organization continue to adapt to ensure it can serve its evolving membership."

Appointed Director of the Iowa Department of Transportation in May 2011, Trombino is responsible for a \$1 billion annual budget, approximately 3,000 employees, 9,400 miles of highways and 4,300 bridges. The state's modal programs of transit, rail, and air as well as motor vehicle services, motor carrier services, and enforcement departments also fall under the agency's umbrella.

Trombino is a member of the AASHTO executive committee and Chair of the AASHTO Subcommittee on Transportation Communications. Prior to joining Iowa DOT, Trombino worked at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for 17 years holding several positions, including operations director of the highway division and director of the Bureau of Transit, Local Roads, Rails and Harbors. Trombino also spent four years in the finance and banking industry in Chicago and Washington, D.C. Trombino earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

AASHTO Vice President David Bernhardt, P.E., was appointed commissioner of the Maine Department of Transportation in February 2011. Commissioner Bernhardt joined the Maine Department of Transportation in 1984 and has held several positions at the department over the years. Immediately prior to his becoming Commissioner, Bernhardt served as Maine DOT's Director of Engineering and Operations. Commissioner Bernhardt is a 1984 graduate of the University of Maine at Orono, where he earned Associate's and Bachelor of Science degrees in Civil Engineering.

[Category: Government/Public Administration]

Contact: Tony Dorsey, Media Relations Manager, 202/412-2391

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Load-Date: January 1, 2016

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Iowa DOT Using Digital ID's, Expect Driverless Vehicles On Iowa Roads in Two Years

NBC - 13 WHO (Des Moines, Iowa)

September 10, 2015 Thursday

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Section: NEWS

Length: 416 words

Byline: Justin Surrency

Body

AMES, Iowa--Iowa driver's licenses are already going digital. "You can't get it in California, New York, Florida or Georgia. You can only get it in the state of Iowa."

Iowa Department of Transportation Director Paul Trombino says Iowa is the first state to offer a prototype for digital licenses currently being used by Iowa DOT employees. The new licenses which will only be optional and not mandatory are fitted with even more secure technology than the card version.

Trombino explained, "I use a fingerprint to open up my phone that can help authorize that. You may have to make a facial movement so it's not just looking at a picture in order to open up the biometric perspective, so only you can open that up." If that isn't secure enough, "The picture physically moves, so it's not a static picture like your regular driver's license," said Trombino.

Tim Gillie, who was visiting Iowa on a cross country trip from Virginia said the the technology being used first in Iowa came as a surprise to him. "Iowa being the first? That's kind of different for me to hear. It doesn't seem like Iowa has been the first in a whole lot of things at least in my understanding ,but it sounds new and exciting."

Some Iowans were already excited about their I.D. going digital. Elijah Jobes, from Indianola said, "It would probably be more convenient. If you lose your wallet you won't have to buy a new license."

The Iowa DOT isn't stopping there. They plan to roll out a project to get driver-less vehicles fully functioning on Iowa roads. Trombino says first they'll need to prep them.

"They need to have very clear pavement markings because they read pavement markings and signs and all that. The second thing is they need high definition mapping and that's mapping down to the centimeter level."

Those vehicles without anyone behind the wheel are coming sooner than you think.

"I would say in the next two years," said Trombino. The projects could make Iowa a leader of the pack. "We think the sooner we can make good decisions to do the right thing to offer these opportunities for businesses and citizens in the state, let alone companies not in the state to come here, it's just a win-win for the state of Iowa."

The Iowa DOT plans for another ninety days of testing the digital licenses with software designed by MorphoTrust, before expanding to people outside the department and they are currently partnering with the University of Iowa as they prepare for driver-less vehicles in the future.

Load-Date: September 11, 2015

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EUROPE - FRANCE - ARMAMENTS

Industry SnapShot

September 1, 2015

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Length: 37720 words

Body

News and Commentary

DefenseWorld reports - French Defense Firms To Accompany Jean-Yves Le Drian To Malaysia – 31/08/2015.

Several business representatives from French defense industry will be part of the delegation that will be accompanying Minister of Defense Jean-Yves Le Drian during his visit to Malaysia on August 31st and September 1.

For the complete story, see :

http://www.defenseworld.net/news/13903/French_Defense_Firms_To_Accompany_Jean_Yves_Le_Drian_To_Malaysia#.VeTz8SXvPIU

Defense World reports - Rafale Fighters, Mistral Aircraft Carrier Not On Malaysian Purchase List – 31/08/2015

Malaysian defense minister omitted mentioning big purchases like Rafale fighter jets and Mistral aircraft carrier ahead of French Defense Minister's visit to the nation.

For the complete story, see :

http://www.defenseworld.net/news/13904/Rafale_Fighters__Mistral_Aircraft_Carrier_Not_On_Malaysian_Purchase_List#.VeT0CyXvPIU

Economic Times reports - Mirage 2000 fighter aircraft to be upgraded with multi-function displays – 30/08/2015.

The upgraded Mirage 2000 fighter aircraft will be installed with India-made multi-function displays under an Indo-French partnership, as part of a programme to enhance the operational life of multi-role fighters by around 20 years.

For the complete story, see :

http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/48732142.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

Defense World reports - India, France Inter-Governmental Agreement on Rafale Purchase Likely Next Week – 29/08/2015

France and India are expected to sign an inter-governmental agreement on the purchase of the Dassault Rafale fighter aircraft next week.

For the complete story, see :

http://www.defenseworld.net/news/13888/India__France_Inter_Governmental_Agreement_on_Rafale_Purchase_Likely_Next_Week#.VeT0ZyXvPIU

Intelligence Online - F35: US judges rule against Thales – 26/08/2015

The French electronics company Thales has lost its case.

For the complete story, see :

<http://www.intelligenceonline.com/corporate-intelligence/2015/08/26/f35-us-judges-rule-against-thales,108088693-BRE>

Defense World reports - Neuron UCAV Completes Combat Capability Tests – 25/08/2015

The flight test campaign in Italy of the Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle (UCAV) Neuron has been successfully concluded with the achievement of all established goals, thus allowing an important step forward for the program.

For the complete story, see :

http://www.defenseworld.net/news/13844/Neuron_UCAV_Completes_Combat_Capability_Tests#.VeT4BiXvPIU

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Media Releases

TIGER HAD Helicopter: First in-flight presentation in Warsaw – 27/08/2015

Airbus Helicopters' combat-proven attack helicopter showcased on August 27th

Warsaw, Poland, 27 August, 2015 - Airbus Helicopters has announced that the Tiger will give its first dynamic presentation in Poland, a week before being displayed for the second time at the 23rd edition of MSPO in Kielce.

The combat helicopter that will perform the flight demonstration is a Tiger HAD from the French Army. It is a modern, combat-proven, high-tech helicopter with the first all-composite structure, one of the latest glass cockpits and a full range of armament allowing it to successfully fulfill multiple missions such as attack, escort, ground fire support, armed reconnaissance and combat.

With its flat and narrow silhouette the Tiger HAD's advantages include low detectability, low vulnerability, high survivability, high agility and maneuverability making it the attack helicopter best adapted to both symmetric and asymmetric battlefields with unique capabilities whether for air-to-ground or air-to-air combat.

It is equipped with an extremely accurate 30mm turret cannon and a range of wing-mounted missiles and rockets together with a highly efficient electronic warfare system giving it unrivaled versatility.

Tiger HAD is navalised and can be fully operated from sea.

The Tiger is a key asset in any deployment whether for direct combat or escort missions. It can be deployed anywhere thanks to its robustness and simplicity of use. The Tiger lives up to its commitments in theaters of operations – it is easy to maintain, does not require heavy infrastructure and has a good level of availability.

Since July 2009, Tigers have been deployed continuously by the French Army in different areas, such as Afghanistan, Libya and Sahel. While deployments in Afghanistan and Libya have come to an end, Tigers are still supporting missions in Sahel, where, despite the hostile operating conditions, the Tiger has shown a very high level of availability and logged more than 2,050 flight hours since the start of deployment in January 2013.

These recent theatres of operations have demonstrated that the Tiger has the lowest maintenance needs of its class and that when operated with a Caracal they form the most lethal duet.

To date, Airbus Helicopters has delivered more than 120 Tiger helicopters to France, Germany, Spain and Australia and the aircraft has accumulated more than 68,000 flying hours.

About Airbus Helicopters

Airbus Helicopters is a division of Airbus Group. The company provides the most efficient civil and military helicopter solutions to its customers who serve, protect, save lives and safely carry passengers in highly demanding environments. Flying more than 3 million flight hours per year, the company's in-service fleet includes some 12,000 helicopters operated by more than 3,000 customers in 152 countries. Airbus Helicopters employs more than 23,000 people worldwide and in 2014 generated revenues of 6.5 billion Euros.

In line with the company's new identity, fully integrated into Airbus Group, Airbus Helicopters has renamed its product range replacing the former "EC" designation with an "H".

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http://www.airbushelicopters.com/website/en/press/TIGER-HAD-Helicopter:-First-in-flight-presentation-in-Warsaw_1817.html

The Royal Thai Air Force receives four EC725s – 25/08/2015

- Delivery of first batch of four completed this month; with another two due next year • Fleet will be used for combat search & rescue, national search & rescue flights and troop transportation missions

Bangkok, 25 August 2015 – Airbus Helicopters has completed delivery of an initial four EC725s to the Royal Thai Air Force, providing highly-capable rotorcraft for this military service's search and rescue and troop transport duties.

The order of four EC725s was signed in 2012, with the deliveries having just been completed. They are expected to begin operations later this month. Two additional EC725s were booked in 2014 for deliveries to the Royal Thai Air Force next year.

"With Thailand's investment in the modernization of its aircraft inventory, the EC725s will become a formidable asset in the Royal Thai Air Force's helicopter fleet," said Fabrice Rochereau, Airbus Helicopters' Vice President of Sales and Customer Relations in Asia Pacific.

The EC725 is an 11-ton twin-engine helicopter featuring high-performance navigation and mission systems – including a unique digital four-axis autopilot. Delivering excellent flight autonomy and seating 28 persons, this

powerful helicopter is perfectly tailored for the Royal Thai Air Force's combat search and rescue (CSAR) missions, search and rescue (SAR) flights, troop transport operations and other tasks.

"We welcome the Royal Thai Air Force as a new Airbus Helicopters operator," said Derek Sharples, the Managing Director of Airbus Helicopters Southeast Asia. "They can count on our full resources to support the successful deployment of the aircraft, and proximity services from our Thailand-based customer center."

Airbus Helicopters' EC725 is a military rotorcraft of reference for the Asia Pacific region. Indonesia has ordered six units, deliveries of which started in late 2014; while Malaysia is already operating its fleet of 12 aircraft, performing numerous SAR missions at high availability rates.

About Airbus Helicopters

Airbus Helicopters is a division of Airbus Group. The company provides the most efficient civil and military helicopter solutions to its customers who serve, protect, save lives and safely carry passengers in highly demanding environments. Flying more than 3 million flight hours per year, the company's in-service fleet includes some 12,000 helicopters operated by more than 3,000 customers in 152 countries. Airbus Helicopters employs more than 23,000 people worldwide and in 2014 generated revenues of 6.5 billion Euros. In line with the company's new identity, fully integrated into Airbus Group, Airbus Helicopters has renamed its product range replacing the former "EC" designation with an "H".

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http://www.airbushelicopters.com/website/en/press/The-Royal-Thai-Air-Force-receives-four-EC725s_1815.html

DCNS EXHIBITS AT MSPO EXPO 2015 FROM 1 TO 4 SEPTEMBER, AT KIELCE, POLAND – 31/08/2015

DCNS will participate in MSPO Expo 2015 in Kielce which will be held in Poland from 1 to 4 September 2015. DCNS is a world leader in naval defence and an innovator in energy. As a naval prime contractor, shipbuilder and systems integrator, DCNS combines resources and expertise spanning the naval defence value chain and entire system lifecycles. DCNS delivers innovative solutions from integrated warships to strategic systems, equipment and services.

For a strategic partnership with Poland to enhance Polish naval and industrial autonomy

DCNS proposes to the Polish Navy the sea proven SCORPENE® class submarine with a highly performing acoustic discretion, an increased submerged autonomy thanks to the latest-generation air-independent propulsion systems, and the capacity to integrate Naval Cruise Missile (NCM). On 19th May 2015, DCNS achieved a world premiere in Europe in successfully launching from a surface ship the first NCM, developed by defence group MBDA for the French armed forces. The NCM can strike distant land targets with very high precision, thanks to its guidance system, reducing the risk of collateral damage.

Moreover, DCNS positions itself to build a strategic partnership with Polish industry. Besides, the Group is proposing to the Polish Navy that the majority of work be carried out in Poland by PGZ shipyards, for construction and maintenance of SCORPENE® submarines. DCNS is also proposing to PGZ the construction and long-term maintenance in their shipyards of the future surface vessels for Poland based on the new successful GOWIND® 2500 design including a combat system that could be jointly provided with CTM, a PGZ's company. DCNS has a long tradition of technology transfer and has consistently demonstrated that it can be a key partner for navies, giving its customers full control of their sovereignty.

Hervé Guillou, Chairman and CEO of DCNS, stated: "DCNS is committed to pursuing its growth internationally and is willing to develop a long term and strategic partnership with Poland. As the major supplier and partner of the French Navy and with the support of the French authorities and its industrial partners, DCNS will be able to provide the best naval solutions necessary to significantly strengthen sovereignty of Poland and its autonomy to ensure the through-life support for its forces."

DCNS showcases its state-of-the-art products and solutions including:

Submarine:

SCORPENE® class submarines, already chosen by the Chilean, Royal Malaysian, Indian and Brazilian Navies, represent the state-of-the-art in submarine design and construction and benefits from the latest technologies developed for nuclear-powered classes operated by the French Navy, particularly as regards acoustic discretion and combat system performance.

SUBTICS® Combat Management System, already operational on board French Navy submarines as well as other export client Navy submarines, has demonstrated its impressive level of performance. It offers a unique capacity to detect and track very distant noise emitters at high speeds, establish a tactical summary and provide the necessary decision-support information and successfully perform the simultaneous launch of several types of weapon.

Surface combatant:

GOWIND® 2500 is a new generation of compact combat vessels, robust and well equipped, both in terms of electronics, weapons and projection capacities. Equipped with DCNS SETIS® Combat Management System, GOWIND® 2500 has already enjoyed a significant commercial success as 10 units were sold in 2013 and 2014 for the Malaysian Navy and the Egyptian Navy. DCNS also guarantees the necessary support to ensure locally the tailoring of the design and construction as well as through-life support.

Equipment:

CANTO® represents a breakthrough in the field of torpedo defence. It is designed to protect any platform, submarine or surface, against the most advanced torpedoes and the previous generation of torpedoes as well. CANTO® is ordered by the French Navy to protect its SSN and SSBN and by the Brazilian Navy to protect the new SSK fleet. Unlike the classical decoys aiming at seducing the attacking torpedo by recognizing its acoustic signal and reproducing one false target, CANTO® is based on dilution/confusion principle. CANTO® countermeasure acts completely independently of the torpedo threats thus offering a protection against numerous simultaneous torpedo attacks even in case of unknown torpedo threats.

Videos and photos available for download: <http://www.salledepresse.com/en/org/dcns>

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<http://en.dcnsgroup.com/news/dcnsg-exhibits-at-mspo-expo-2015-from-1-to-4-september-at-kielce-poland/>

Airbus Defence and Space supports the “Under the Pole” team by programming its satellites at the key stages of their expedition – 31/08/2015

Under The Pole is a series of submarine polar expeditions aiming at exploring the hidden face of Arctic and Antarctic polar regions in their diversities. A new submarine approach providing world unique images and a better scientific knowledge of the environment.

Pléiades observes the boat of the Underwater Polar Expedition, Under the Pole, trapped by the ice floe offshore Greenland.

The two masts belonging to the Why, the boat of the underwater polar expedition Under the Pole, cast a two parallel lined shadow on the ice floe. The vessel is trapped by the ice in a cove within Uummannaq bay, located on the west coast of Greenland. At latitude 70° North, the expedition has just spent the long arctic winter aboard a motionless boat.

To find out more <http://www.geo-airbusds.com/en/6728-under-the-pole-underwater-polar-expedition>

<http://airbusdefenceandspace.com/newsroom/news-and-features/airbus-defence-and-space-supports-the-under-the-pole-team-by-programming-its-satellites-at-the-key-stages-of-their-expedition/>

MorphoTrust Launches Nation's First Mobile Driver License Pilot – 26/08/2015

Iowans Go Cardless with Mobile Application to Test Digital ID in Real World Situations

Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) employees are the first in the nation to use the MorphoTrust mobile driver license (mDL) software as part of a new pilot announced today by MorphoTrust USA (Safran). MorphoTrust, the identity solutions provider to more than 70% of U.S. motor vehicle agencies (MVAs), including Iowa, has delivered a test version of the secure mDL software to an appointed Iowa DOT user group who will assess and validate the solution for use in situations where physical licenses are typically presented. The pilot will also test record updates to the Iowa DOT's customer record system with the changes rendered on the phone in real-time. Information such as change of address, over/under 21-years-old status, organ donor status and change in driving status, endorsements, or restrictions, can be updated to the mDL immediately.

The MorphoTrust mDL software carries the same level of trust as its physical counterpart, the driver license/ID card. The mDL software includes both visible and covert security features that are linked and layered in the digital image seen on screen. These features not only ensure a high level of security, they also enable the mDL to be quickly and reliably authenticated when presented for identification purposes and protect against fraudulent reproduction. In addition to PIN and fingerprint-based security features already built into phones used in the pilot, the mDL app can be secured using MorphoTrust facial recognition unlock technologies which requires the user to take a selfie and a custom PIN.

"Iowa is first to take advantage of MorphoTrust's commercial mDL software – an innovation being used to develop the nation's first secure mobile driver license," said Bob Eckel, CEO of MorphoTrust. "And, just as the physical driver

license is more than a picture on a card, so the mobile driver license must contain the same level of security and authentication ability for it to be useful and trusted."

"We were very encouraged by the interest generated by our first public announcement of Iowa's Mobile Identity Application," said Paul Trombino, director of the Iowa Department of Transportation. "Although we're not yet ready to release the mDL for customer use, the lessons learned in this pilot will demonstrate the use case for our mDL Application to be offered in the future as an option to all citizens across the state, and may help guide other states who want to launch similar digital identity programs. I firmly believe this is an important first step in creating a one person, one identity, one credential opportunity for our customers."

Speakers from Iowa DOT will present on the pilot at the 2015 AAMVA International Conference in Des Moines, August 25-27, 2015.

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Thales Australia appoints Belinda Hutchinson AM as new Board Chair – 27/08/2015

Thales Australia has appointed Belinda Hutchinson AM, one of the country's most experienced non-executive directors, as Board Chair.

Ms Hutchinson brings a wealth of high-level commercial experience to Thales Australia at a time of civil market growth following a series of major contract wins.

Thales Australia CEO Chris Jenkins said: "We are both pleased and excited that Ms Hutchinson has agreed to join our Board. She is a leader in education and has a commitment to the development of science, technology, engineering and maths careers for the next generation of Australians. Belinda brings to Thales her vast experience and a distinguished career that has already served this country well, and will continue to do so."

Ms Hutchinson said: "As an advanced manufacturer and service provider, Thales is actively contributing to Australia's development as a knowledge and technology-based economy, so I am excited by my new role as Chair."

"Thales has a successful track record of investing in innovative, safe and reliable products and services for critical infrastructure such as air traffic management, ground transportation and security, and has a long and trusted record of support to the Australian Defence Force."

Ms Hutchinson is Chancellor of the University of Sydney, Chair of Future Generation Global Investment Company and a non-executive director of AGL Energy and Australian Philanthropic Services. She was also previously Chairman of QBE Insurance Group, as well as a director of Telstra, Coles Myer, TAB, Energy Australia, St Vincent's Health Australia and the Crane Group.

About Thales

Thales is a global technology leader for the Aerospace, Transport, Defence and Security markets. With 61,000 employees in 56 countries, Thales reported sales of €13 billion in 2014. With over 20,000 engineers and researchers, Thales has a unique capability to design and deploy equipment, systems and services to meet the most complex security requirements. Its unique international footprint allows it to work closely with its customers all over the world.

Thales Australia is a trusted partner of the Australian Defence Force and is also present in commercial sectors ranging from air traffic management and ground transport systems to security systems and services. Employing around 3,200 people in over 35 sites across the country, Thales Australia recorded revenues of AUD 1 billion in 2014.

<https://www.thalesgroup.com/en/australia/press-release/thales-australia-appoints-belinda-hutchinson-am-new-board-chair#sthash.ieAo9eF1.dpuf>

Successful launch of the EUTELSAT 8 West B satellite, built by Thales Alenia Space – 21/08/2015

Cannes, August 20, 2015 – The EUTELSAT 8 West B communications satellite was successfully launched today from the Guiana Space Center in Kourou, French Guiana, by an Ariane 5 rocket. Thales Alenia Space is the program prime contractor, working on behalf of Eutelsat Communications, one of the world's leading satellite operators.

EUTELSAT 8 West B is the 25th satellite built by Thales Alenia Space for Eutelsat and the 74th satellite in the Spacebus family to enter service.

This high-capacity satellite will be positioned at 8° West, joining satellites already operated at the adjacent 7° West position by Eutelsat and the Egyptian satellite company, Nilesat. EUTELSAT 8 West B will bolster Eutelsat's in-orbit capacity to meet strong market demand for video services from these positions. This additional capacity will help Eutelsat meet the fast growing digital television market requirements in regions ranging from North Africa to the Middle East.

The EUTELSAT 8 West B satellite is equipped with 40 operational Ku-band transponders, primarily intended for direct-to-home (DTH) TV broadcast markets in North Africa and the Middle East. It will also introduce a C-band mission at the 8° West position, with ten operational transponders covering the African continent and reaching west to South America.

Based on the Thales Alenia Space Spacebus 4000C4 platform, with a 12 kW payload, EUTELSAT 8 West B weighed 5,800 kg at launch. Its expected orbital life exceeds 17 years, with a specified design life of 15.25 years.

EUTELSAT 8 West B is also the first satellite embarking advanced payload functions for performance, flexibility and signal security. The innovative technologies underpinning these functions were developed for Eutelsat by Thales Alenia Space, with the support of the European Space Agency (ESA) and the French space agency CNES.

"This launch marks our latest joint success with Eutelsat Communications and Arianespace," said Jean-Loïc Galle, President and CEO of Thales Alenia Space. "Together with Eutelsat, we are now starting the orbit raising phase for a final in orbit acceptance foreseen in October. We, at Thales Alenia Space, will continue to deploy our wide-ranging skills and expertise to support Eutelsat's growth, with whom we have established long-standing relations reaching back over 25 years."

About Thales Alenia Space

Recent editorials published in Iowa newspapers

Associated Press State & Local

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Length: 2092 words

Byline: By The Associated Press

Body

Des Moines Register. July 29, 2015

Traffic camera scandal raises abuse concerns

A few weeks ago, the former head of Redflex Traffic Systems, a company that several Iowa cities use to enforce their traffic laws, pleaded guilty to federal bribery charges in Ohio.

Karen Finley, the former CEO of Redflex, admitted that she participated in a scheme in which the company provided elected officials with campaign contributions to secure lucrative city contracts for traffic-enforcement cameras.

The scandal is not limited to Ohio. Finley is also expected to plead guilty to bribery charges tied to allegations of widespread corruption in Chicago's use of traffic-enforcement cameras provided by Redflex. In fact, the company has acknowledged paying up to \$2 million in bribes to politically connected Chicago officials.

In addition, one former Redflex executive has alleged in civil-court filings that the company's corruption was national in scope, with "bribes and lavish gifts," including tickets to sporting events and golf outings, doled out to officials in "dozens" of municipalities in at least 13 states.

To date, Iowa is not among the states named in these civil and criminal court cases, although Redflex cameras are used in Davenport, Council Bluffs and Sioux City. In Des Moines, Muscatine and Cedar Rapids, the camera-enforcement contract is with a Redflex competitor, Gatso USA.

Still, the conduct of Redflex, which retains 40 percent or more of the civil fines it imposes on motorists, ought to make public officials throughout Iowa think twice about privatizing traffic enforcement or any other aspect of police work.

It's indisputable that red-light cameras and speeding cameras can be valuable, reliable tools for improving traffic safety and freeing up law enforcement officers to engage in community policing. But the technology also lends itself to abuse - not just by unscrupulous vendors, but by cities more interested in padding their budgets than in saving lives.

In some areas of the country, a single speeding ticket tied to camera enforcement can result in a fine of \$500 or more, which is more than enough to cause some people to miss a payment on their home or car. In Sioux City, where state transportation officials say certain cameras are doing nothing to enhance traffic safety, a Redflex-issued speeding ticket can result in a fine of \$168 for going more than 10 mph over the speed limit. That's about \$100 more than the fine imposed by other Iowa cities for the same violation using the same technology.

When cities use automated cameras and oversized fines not to protect the public but to create new streams of revenue for themselves and their for-profit partners, they're corrupting our system of justice. And when one of the major beneficiaries of such a scheme is a private company facing allegations of widespread, felony-level criminal conduct, this form of "law enforcement" begins to look a lot like government-sanctioned extortion.

In years past, the Iowa Legislature has considered proposals to ban the use of these cameras. That's understandable, but a better solution might be to impose caps on the fines that can be levied, and to continue the ban on their use in areas where they don't improve public safety.

There's no question that people who speed or run red lights ought to be penalized, and automated-camera technology has the potential to achieve that in ways that are both fair and efficient. But as recent history has shown, the technology can also be misused to gouge citizens and generate profits for companies that have no respect for the law.

In the final analysis, camera-enforcement technology suffers from one critical, and perhaps fatal, flaw: It's only as trustworthy as the people who use it.

Quad-City Times. July 28, 2015

Iowa law stymies distillery businesses

Iowa's liquor laws remain anchored in post-prohibition logic and fear, creating a heavy government regulatory environment where the state doesn't just limit competition; it serves as the exclusive hard liquor distribution monopoly, reaping profits and limiting the competition from private beer and wine makers.

We've editorialized on this page regularly about Iowa's unique government liquor business, mostly to no avail. A bill to simply study this conflicted system failed, leaving intact state government's \$302 million-a-year business that reaped \$119 million in 2014 liquor profits.

A recent Des Moines Register series explores even more problems with Iowa's state-run liquor monopoly. It's standing in the way of Iowa's distillery entrepreneurs. Register reporter Brianne Pfannenstiel disclosed how this government-run business precludes these entrepreneurs from selling their own products.

She described how Iowa Distilling Co. employees in Cumming, Iowa, must bring products to the state distribution warehouse to be scanned, sold to the state, then bought back at a 150-percent markup to be trucked back to the distillery and sold to customers.

State laws allow beer and wine makers to peddle their own products. Iowa distilleries are forced to jump through state government hoops.

Iowa's entrepreneur distillers can't sell by the glass. They can't charge for tastings or even tours that offer tasting. They can't sell online. Distillery customers can buy no more than two bottles per visit.

Pro-business lawmakers should be aghast.

Truly conservative Iowans should be, too.

Our beef with Iowa's liquor monopoly is more fundamental. We don't believe government should be in the for-profit liquor distribution business. We don't believe state government employees should pick preferred brands, determine discounts and dictate the flow of these privately made products. We don't believe taxpayer-owned trucks and warehouses should store and ship these products.

Let Iowa - like 33 other states - regulate and tax liquor. We see no reason for Iowa to continue operating its exclusive liquor distribution business to the detriment of Iowa distilleries. Worse, we see no way around the conflict of the state profiting from hard liquor while regulating every aspect of their beer and wine competitors.

The conflict gets deeper when considering the tax dollars legislators allocate to enforce alcohol consumption laws, treat alcohol addiction and imprison chronic offenders. State government measures its Alcoholic Beverage Division success by increases in per capita consumption and expenses on alcohol.

Increasing alcohol consumption should never be a government role or goal.

Fortunately, plenty of models exist in states across the nation that would finally get Iowa out of the hard liquor business and out of the way of private entrepreneurs eager to jump in.

The Hawk Eye (Burlington). July 28, 2015

Too many roads

Iowa road's chief says state can't afford all its highways.

While debating Jack Hatch last year in Burlington, Gov. Terry Branstad acknowledged the state would need new revenue streams to finance its road network.

He was responding to a question about the fuel tax because his director of the Department of Transportation, **Paul Trombino**, mentioned the state could not afford the roads it had, let alone any new ones.

It was an important local issue as U.S. 61 between Burlington and the Muscatine County line remains two lanes wide and needs widening.

Specifically, Branstad was asked about his support for increasing the fuel tax, and being the politician he is, he avoided answering directly. Yet as he danced around the question, he noted Iowa may have to explore other options such as taxing the number of miles a vehicle travels.

After defeating Hatch, Branstad did sign off on a dime increase in the fuel tax in February and bottled-up projects - including portions of the U.S. 61 work - got the green light.

Trombino, though, isn't through with his realistic view of Iowa's admittedly large network of roads. After all, the recently completed RAGBRAI has become as popular as it has partly because it relies on the state's lightly traveled, but well-constructed farm-to-market roads.

Talking recently to the Urban Land Institute, **Trombino** said the road network is overbuilt and not sustainable. Inevitably, he said, it must shrink.

According to the website Strong Towns, per capita driving in Iowa peaked in 2004 and has been declining since. Yet from 2009 to 2011 the state spent 52 percent of its highway money on expansion. The upshot is existing roads got less attention than they deserved.

Smart Growth America, a research group that studies traffic, estimates Iowa must spend about \$555 million a year over the next 20 years to get its existing roads ship-shape. But Trombino has access to less than half that.

Raising the fuel tax was no easy feat and unlikely to be replicated anytime soon. So the answer is to shift money from building to maintaining.

Trombino is going one step further. He said Iowans will need to determine which roads "we really want to keep" and let the others "deteriorate and go away."

During Tom Vilsack's administration, the state sloughed off 600 miles of state roads to counties and cities. (A previous study recommended transferring three times that.) What Trombino is saying and what research shows is we should expect another purge. At that point, local voters will have to decide which of those they can afford to maintain.

That may be realistic, but fairness dictates the state must complete the U.S. 61 corridor, which may include a bypass in Burlington. That's because usage on the road is expected to increase from 3,900 to as many as 8,550 vehicles per day - some of that coming from the Iowa Fertilizer Plant, expected to come online later this year. It also will put roads in this area on par with the rest of the state.

Accomplishing it requires Congress getting its act together and passing a long-term highway bill, which will finance much of the work.

But with that project done, Iowa would do well to assess what it has and ask the hard question: What can it afford to maintain in the best possible, yet affordable shape?

Dubuque Telegraph Herald. July 31, 2015

End parking-lot rituals to get care

Government officials should be embarrassed about the scene we photographed in a Dubuque parking lot last week.

We took photos after Jennifer McFadden retrieved her 12-year-old son Liam from Hills & Dales, an accredited facility for mentally and physically disabled children and young adults, so she could give him a dose of cannabis oil, which she hopes will control the boy's epilepsy.

Liam receives the cannabis oil, which is extracted from marijuana, in a parking lot off the Hills & Dales campus. His mother has state government's authorization to possess and administer cannabis oil. But since the federal government still takes a hard line regarding marijuana, and since Hills & Dales can't afford to lose federal funding (or to face federal prosecution), the agency's officials ask that Liam receive the medication off-campus.

So, because the State of Iowa and federal government aren't on the same page regarding cannabis oil for medical purposes, a Dubuque mother and her son have to go through this rigmarole every day, twice a day, rain or shine, summer or winter. That inconvenience is magnified when one considers that these trips to the parking lot are confusing for Liam, who has the cognition level of an 18-month-old.

Jennifer McFadden acknowledges that she could be prosecuted if federal authorities pressed the issue, but she considers it a necessary risk to see if the oil will help her son. Good for her.

This sad situation underscores the disconnect between the Iowa and federal governments regarding legitimate medicinal uses of marijuana and extracts. We are not calling for relaxation of the law to the point that the remedy for any person's made-up malady is smoking a joint or partaking in pot-infused brownies. Cannabis oil has little or none of the chemical properties associated with the "high" of marijuana. This is about better health, not getting high.

Regulate and monitor, yes, but the feds should be more open to allowing people like the McFaddens to try to improve their children's lives.

Iowa isn't totally off the hook on this issue, however. Curiously, the way Iowa law currently stands, parents may secure a permit to possess cannabis oil - it just can't be produced or sold in Iowa. The Legislature failed to address that inconsistency in the last session, so it should take care of that in 2016.

End the parking-lot ritual for the McFaddens and other families. Federal and state laws should regulate but not prohibit cannabis oil for medicinal purposes.

Load-Date: August 4, 2015

End of Document

Iowa Leaders Send Letter to President Obama, EPA Administrator McCarthy on Proposed RFS Rule

Targeted News Service

July 27, 2015 Monday 11:13 PM EST

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Length: 901 words

Byline: Targeted News Service

Dateline: DES MOINES, Iowa

Body

Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds, R-Iowa, issued the following news release:

Iowa Gov. Terry E. Branstad, Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds, Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey, Director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority Debi Durham, Director of the Iowa Department of Transportation Paul Trombino and Director of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Chuck Gipp today sent a letter to President Obama and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Gina McCarthy encouraging the administration to revise their ill-advised proposed rule on the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) and submitted comments to the EPA in support of a robust RFS. The comments were sent today, July 27, 2015, the final day the EPA will accept comments on the proposed rule regarding the RFS volume obligation levels. The comment period ends at 11:59 p.m. ET tonight. Iowans interested in commenting on the proposed rule can do so here: <http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=EPA-HQ-OAR-2015-0111>.

In the letter to Obama and McCarthy, Iowa leaders write, "As state leaders, we are keenly focused on helping create a business and public policy environment that drives job growth throughout the State - in communities both large and small, urban and rural. We share the concerns of many Iowans and citizens throughout the Midwest that the EPA's current proposal will undermine our shared goal of a healthy economy in rural America and abandon the various public policy benefits that flow from the RFS. For decades, the agricultural economy lurched from crisis to crisis and farmers often depended on government subsidies to stay afloat. The RFS helped brighten the future of the agricultural and biosciences sectors by providing a stable policy framework that gives value-add opportunities for various agricultural commodities, while helping reduce transportation emissions - a true win-win.

[...]

"If the EPA's proposed rule stands, consumers across America would be limited in their choices at the pump. When consumers have choices, like they do in Iowa, they choose ethanol and other biofuels. The oil companies are preventing fuel choice in other parts of the country and consumers lose, paying much more for fuel. The Iowa Department of Revenue tracks biofuels sales and the data is clear - when given the choice, Iowans choose biofuels. Consumer purchases of E85 (85 percent denatured ethanol fuel and 15 percent gasoline) in Iowa continue to increase - growing from 9.12 million gallons in 2012 to 11.15 million gallons in 2013, to 12.08 million gallons in 2014 - a growth of nearly 33% in that period according to Iowa Department of Revenue data. Total B100 (100 percent biodiesel) sales in Iowa have expanded from 7.4 million gallons in 2010 to 33.3 million gallons in 2014. In 2010, the average blend level of biodiesel-blended gallons sold in Iowa was 3.1 percent and by 2014, the average blend level had more than

tripled to 9.4 percent. Big Oil does not like competition - but American consumers deserve and demand choices at the fuel pump."

The full letter to President Obama and Administrator McCarthy can be read here: <https://governor.iowa.gov/file/state-of-iowa-rfs-comments-july-2015letter-onlyfinalpdf>.

Highlights of Iowa leaders' engagement on the RFS include:

- * State and Federal elected officials, including Gov. Branstad and Lt. Governor Reynolds, participated in a "Defend the RFS" event.
- * Gov. Branstad traveled to Washington, DC, joining a group of Iowa farmers and biofuels producers, to testify at the Federal government's only public hearing and met with EPA Administrator McCarthy.
- * Gov. Branstad, Lt. Gov. Reynolds, Secretary Bill Northey and the entire Iowa congressional delegation sent a joint letter to Federal leaders advocating for the many benefits that flow from the RFS.
- * Gov. Terry Branstad and Gov. Mark Dayton (D-Minn.) penned an op-ed in support of a strong Renewable Fuel Standard.
- * Gov. Terry Branstad brought together a bipartisan group of six governors to sign on to a letter to President Barack Obama, EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy and United States Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack expressing their support for a strong RFS.
- * Leaders from across the Midwest joined Gov. Branstad and Lt. Gov. Reynolds for their "Hearing in Heartland," which was open to all interested citizens; 83 panelists from across the Midwest Region spoke from the heart about the importance of the RFS to their livelihoods and a healthy rural economy while only two individuals expressed opposition to a robust RFS.
- * Gov. Branstad, in his Condition of the State address, called on the Iowa Legislature to pass a resolution in support of a robust RFS. The Legislature unanimously passed bicameral, bipartisan resolutions calling for the EPA to reverse course and support a strong RFS. View the resolutions: House Resolution 101 | Senate Resolution 101
- * State of Iowa leaders submitted formal comments to the EPA with current data and analysis that provides Federal leaders the opportunity and obligation to revise their initial volume obligations upward.
- * Gov. Branstad and Sec. Northey testify in support of a robust RFS before the EPA's hearing in Kansas City.
- * Lt. Gov. Reynolds submits written testimony to the EPA in support of a robust RFS.
- * Lt. Gov. Reynolds rallies for a robust RFS with Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts in Blair, Neb.

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Load-Date: July 28, 2015

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION DIRECTOR PAUL TROMBINO III,
PREPARED TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT
HEARING ON MEETING THE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS OF RURAL
AMERICA, AS RELEASED BY THE COMMITTEE

SEC Wire

June 24, 2015 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS EVENT

Length: 2910 words

Body

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS VICE PRESIDENT PAUL TROMBINO III, P.E., PREPARED TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT HEARING ON MEETING THE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS OF RURAL AMERICA, AS RELEASED BY THE COMMITTEE

JUNE 24, 2015

SPEAKER: PAUL TROMBINO III, P.E. VICE PRESIDENT AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS

[*]

TROMBINO: Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Norton, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the transportation needs facing rural communities throughout the country. My name is Paul Trombino, and I serve as the Director of the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) and the Vice President of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). Today it is my honor to testify on behalf of the State of Iowa and AASHTO, which represents the State departments of transportation (State DOTs) of all 50 States, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico.

I have been honored to serve as Director of the Iowa DOT for the past four years. I have spent over 20 years in public service, starting in 1994 at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, and have served in a variety of leadership

roles, including Operations Director of the Highway Division, Director of Statewide Structures, and Manager of Highway Bid Lettings, prior to becoming Director.

Iowa's location near the center of the country affords both opportunities and challenges. The State features a diverse range of surface transportation options, including highways, freight rail lines, waterways, and public transit all of which contribute to its economy and provide essential service to our citizens. This infrastructure is also the focus of heavy demand from both domestic and international traffic, creating repair and capacity needs throughout the system. To meet this challenge we are continually making improvements while prioritizing safety and mobility.

My main message this morning is to share with you the experience of the State DOTs, including my State of Iowa. As traditional sponsors of transportation projects, State DOTs possess the unique expertise and familiarity with Federal statutory and regulatory requirements associated with project design, procurement, and construction in rural communities.

I also urge prompt action on a well-funded, long-term surface transportation bill that clearly reflects and serves the national interest, in rural parts of the country as well as in our urban centers. No matter the geographic region, the simple unifying fact is that America needs a Federal transportation program that provides robust investment levels coupled with long-term funding stability that serves our national priorities. Furthermore, the Federal program should continue to provide States with flexibility by streamlining regulations and program requirements, while not diminishing the percentage of funds distributed by formula. Enacting this well-funded, long-term Federal program with flexibility for States is absolutely critical if we are to address significant transportation challenges, and, thereby, strengthen every part of the United States and its economy.

Transportation powers the creation of wealth in our nation and all the States, unleashing opportunity for economic activity. Iowa's economy is dependent on a robust and diverse transportation system to move products to a global marketplace. Iowa's transportation system has long provided our State's businesses a competitive advantage and that remains true today in the global economy.

My testimony today will emphasize three main points:

1. The ability of the current system to provide for the needs of rural America;
2. The value of a strong State role in the Federal program; and
3. The benefit to the States from increased program flexibility.

THE ABILITY OF THE CURRENT SYSTEM TO PROVIDE FOR THE NEEDS OF RURAL AMERICA

State DOTs play a critical role in ensuring that we have a safe, reliable, and efficient transportation network. In fact, this past February, my governor Governor Terry Branstad signed into law a ten- cent increase in the State fuel tax passed by Iowa's House and Senate with bipartisan support. Supported by the counties, business organizations, and groups like the Iowa Farm Bureau and Association of Business and Industry, this action will raise an estimated \$215 million in additional resources per year to invest in our State's bridges and roads.

States are also actively involved in assisting transit service, particularly in rural areas and for seniors and special needs individuals. Of the 35 public transit systems in Iowa, 16 serve our regional areas of the State, making Iowa one of only a few States offering public transit service in every county. State DOTs also work closely with local transit agencies to spend ("flex") an average of \$1 billion a year in Federal highway funding on transit projects. By its very nature, there are many challenges in providing adequate rural transit services that meet the growing demands for access to medical care, employment, education, shopping, and recreation. One of the biggest challenges is maintaining the vehicle fleet necessary to provide those services. Unfortunately, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act's (MAP-21) formulas for allocating funding for buses and bus facilities have significantly reduced funding to many rural States. In Iowa, Federal funding for bus replacement has been reduced by over 50 percent

resulting in approximately 60 percent of the vehicle fleet exceeding Federal useful life standards. We were able to take advantage of the flexibility of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement funding to partially offset the impact; however, that just reduces funding available for other transportation needs in Iowa. The end result is that there are fewer vehicles available to provide service at a time when the demands for rural transit service are increasing.

The current transportation planning process reflects a coordinated process involving the State DOTs, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), cities, and counties. During the project selection process, local elected officials identify projects of significant importance to a region and its constituent localities. It also provides extensive opportunity for local officials and communities to consult and inform States of their priorities. These priorities are taken into account in statewide plans along with other considerations, including interstate mobility for people and goods. Recently, Iowa DOT created a local asset management group in conjunction with Iowa State University to help standardize performance data for decision making across all counties and cities, emphasizing consistent use of common data to prevent confusion or uncertainty among the different groups and to encourage a more holistic view of the transportation network.

In Iowa, we are additionally encouraging Statewide and local officials to think holistically about how infrastructure connections occur across multiple localities (through institutions like the Regional Planning Affiliations or RPAs), rather than only on an individualized level. The overall process serves as a reminder of the important function our rural communities provide to the State's economy and transportation network. Likewise, Iowa DOT's role is to emphasize the coordination necessary for the efficient and effective movement of people, goods, and services.

The Iowa DOT has undertaken a first-of-a-kind supply-chain design of an entire State. The focus of this service is to assist producers in designing and optimizing their supply chains and identifying strategic location of their facilities in Iowa to reduce their overall supply chain costs while improving the competitiveness of their products. Strategically, we have used this process to link together the Iowa DOT and the Iowa Economic Development Authority focused jointly on transportation and economic development.

We're working together to effectively identify and prioritize investment opportunities for an optimized freight transportation network in order to lower transportation costs for Iowa businesses and to promote business growth in Iowa. This strategy will help farmers determine how crops can efficiently move to areas of high market demand at a lower cost in less time, and assess connectedness of co-op storage facilities to the rest of the network. Given that 20 to 25 percent of the cost of commodities produced in rural areas is transportation related, this unique work on supply chain design underscores the ability of State DOTs to provide high-level solutions reflecting the Federal program's intent and scope while remaining closely familiar with local conditions.

THE VALUE OF A STRONG STATE ROLE IN THE FEDERAL PROGRAM

For nearly 100 years, the Federal government and State DOTs have worked together to build and maintain our Nation's highway system. The Federal-Aid Road Act of 1916 established this fundamental framework of a Federally-assisted, State-administered Federal-Aid highway program. This relationship was best suited for a growing and geographically diverse nation like ours. Today about \$38 billion is distributed through this Federal program to State DOTs to fund a wide range of projects that are clearly in the interest of the nation as a whole. These projects are the backbone of our country's mobility and support interstate travel and commerce, helping people commute to and from work, and helping goods gain access to a larger market than ever before. Furthermore, States own, operate, and maintain 100 percent of the Interstate Highway System and over 95 percent of the miles on the National Highway System (NHS). Eighty (80) percent of truck traffic and a majority of all travel occur on the NHS. State DOTs are thus an integral component in providing important coordinating functions for upkeep and renovation work.

While the Federal-State partnership is the foundation of our Federal highway program, State DOTs also have strong partnerships with local governments in their respective States. The transportation planning process as strengthened under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and expanded in subsequent

authorizations has enabled State DOTs to work extensively with local planning agencies and the public in developing multimodal transportation plans and identifying projects that are supported by the Highway Trust Fund.

I am proud to say that following adoption of ISTEA, Iowa DOT implemented a regional planning process that mirrors the long-standing metropolitan planning process. In fact, Iowa's 18 RPAs perform most of the same functions as our nine MPOs including developing annual planning work programs, long-range transportation plans, and transportation improvement programs. From the beginning, Iowa's RPAs have been responsible for programming a portion of Federal surface transportation funding on projects of national and regional significance in a coordinated manner.

MAP-21 contained several provisions that further enhanced the role of local government in the transportation planning process, including an increase in Federal funding that is suballocated for projects in different parts of the State based on population. In many cases, this suballocated funding is dedicated to local projects identified solely by local planning agencies. In FY 2014, close to \$5 billion in Federal highway funding was suballocated, which represented a nearly five- percent increase in the amount of funding suballocated annually compared to prior surface transportation authorizations. These provisions actually move Federal law closer to the system we have had in place in Iowa since ISTEA. However, I cannot emphasize enough how critical it was in Iowa to have a strong State-administered Federal program in order to achieve the successful regional planning process. Absent that process, we would see a step back in the coordinated planning and programming of funds which is vital for the effective allocation and use of Federal transportation funding.

Furthermore, MAP-21 introduced the development and implementation of a performance-based transportation program where State DOTs set performance targets based on the current program structure, in areas such as pavement and bridge conditions, injuries and fatalities, traffic congestion, on-road mobile source emissions, and freight movement. As such, selection of Federally-funded projects on the local system will require close coordination if States are to be able to meet their transportation system-wide performance targets.

Any effort to disrupt the Federally-assisted, State-administered structure of the Federal-Aid highway program that has served our nation with great success could undermine the very foundation of a strong Federal role in transportation investment. It is this program framework that built the Interstate Highway System and has maintained the National Highway System the backbone of our national network of roads and bridges that drive our national economy. Rather than altering the Federally-assisted, State-administered nature of the Federal-Aid Highway Program and facing consequences of such disruption, we are prepared to work with Congress to highlight best practices where State DOTs have strong, productive collaborations with local governments and where the transportation planning process is working well. States strongly believe in, and will continue to, consult closely with our important partners in regional and local governments to ensure maximum taxpayer value for the Federal transportation program.

THE BENEFIT TO THE STATES FROM INCREASED FLEXIBILITY

While I mentioned several transportation-related aspects that are distinctive to Iowa at the start of my remarks, the same is true for every other State. This is one reason why the State DOTs regularly share and learn strategies through peer exchanges and best practice discussions. However, the range of approaches utilized by the States is only possible through the flexibility afforded to them from the Federal level.

MAP-21 consolidated the various Federal program categories, which allowed States more options rather than prescriptive direction. This Congressional intent allowed all State DOTs the opportunity to better fashion solutions for the needs of their communities, both rural and urban. The less prescription there is in the Federal program, the more room for creativity and flexibility the States have, which also enables a faster turnaround of funding dollars to important projects. This is important because when that funding is too rigid, more cost is added to the overall job. Minimizing prescriptive language therefore provides States the freedom to construct solutions towards their own unique issues and circumstances. The transportation planning process also provides extensive opportunity for local officials and communities to consult and inform States of their priorities. These priorities are taken into account in statewide plans along with other considerations, including interstate mobility for people and goods.

Increased flexibility also provides States the tools and opportunities to enhance our collaboration with local governments through our planning and programming processes. For example, in Iowa, we took advantage of the increased flexibility of the Transportation Alternative Program funding by allocating the majority of those funds to Iowa's regional and metropolitan planning organizations to let them decide how best to utilize those funds. This further enhanced our State-administered transportation planning process.

The flexibility provided in the Federal program allowed Iowa to be creative in how we addressed supply chain management and how we work with our local partners. These creative approaches work well in Iowa but we recognize that they may not work well in every state. That is why we need to retain State flexibility rather than prescribe a one-size fits all approach for every state. Flexibility allows each state to come up with their own creative solution to their unique set of transportation issues.

CONCLUSION Rural regions and communities across the United States have urgent infrastructure needs as economic and recreational demands increase. Given this reality, we cannot address our nation's 21st century surface transportation investment needs without reaffirming the strong partnerships that form the bedrock of the national transportation program. State DOTs are using their inherent position between the Federal government and local entities to effectively coordinate funds while working to meet national goals and performance standards required by MAP-21.

My State of Iowa continues to ascertain what amongst our current transportation system is most affordable, and how our agency can improve these elements to optimize our value and efficiency for customers and residents. Keeping Federal program prescription to a minimal amount will allow State DOTs to continue pursuing innovative approaches to address their systems' specific challenges. Committing to these principles will continue to provide much-needed benefits to those in Iowa and elsewhere throughout the country.

I want to thank you again for the opportunity to testify today, and I am happy to respond to any questions that you may have.

Load-Date: June 25, 2015

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GOV. BRANSTAD ANNOUNCES QUICK AND EASY DRIVER'S LICENSE RENEWAL OPTIONS AT SEVERAL LOCATIONS AROUND IOWA

States News Service

June 8, 2015 Monday

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Length: 494 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: DES MOINES, Iowa

Body

The following information was released by the office of the governor of Iowa:

Today, during his weekly press conference, Gov. Terry E. Branstad announced that the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) is bringing driver's license services to customers in places where they are already doing business.

Twenty four locations including libraries, Hy-Vee stores, and a Kum and Go around the state now house Motor Vehicle self-service kiosks which allow Iowans to renew or replace their driver's license and identification cards. The kiosks are identical to those currently found in the Ankeny driver's license station. A complete list of kiosk locations, as well as traditional driver's license issuance sites can be found at www.iowadot.gov/mvd/ods/dlsites.htm.

"Technology is allowing Iowans secure and convenient access to services," said Branstad. "If your driver's license is up for renewal and you happen to stop for a gallon of milk or are checking out a book at the library, you may be able to take care of the driver's license task in the same trip."

"The efficient nature of these kiosks allows services to be offered outside of traditional hours," added Branstad. "The kiosks and other online or remote services offer customers convenience, choice, and control the convenience of spending less time and travel to obtain services, choice over how and where they receive services, and control over completion of the service itself."

The kiosks are an extension of online services the Iowa DOT has been offering since 2013 to renew driver's licenses and ID cards, change a mailing address, or other driver-related services.

"Electronic renewal, whether online or through kiosks, offers eligible Iowans a convenient way to renew their card without interrupting their day and driving to an issuance site," Paul Trombino III, director of the Iowa DOT, said. "Since we have instituted online renewals, congestion has lessened at driver's license issuance locations, also saving time for those who need in-person service."

The kiosks offer a unique opportunity for the State of Iowa to partner with private businesses to bring the citizens of Iowa government services. Darryl Eschete, director of the West Des Moines Public Library, said, "The license renewal kiosk program allows Iowa's public libraries to partner with other agencies like the DOT to not only save taxpayer

money by being efficient, but also to save the public's time by being more convenient. This partnership is a classic win-win scenario."

"We're honored to join the State of Iowa and other business partners in this technology movement that will bring added convenience to residents," said Pat Hensley, vice president of government affairs/business innovations at Hy-Vee, Inc. "We are always looking for ways in which Hy-Vee stores can be a one-stop shop for customers."

There are stipulations on who can renew a driver's license or ID card online due to public safety and identity security concerns.

Load-Date: June 8, 2015

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Drivers license kiosk center coming to Waukee

Dallas County News (Adel, Iowa)

June 8, 2015

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Section: NEWS

Length: 583 words

Body

Today, during his weekly press conference, Gov. Terry E. Branstad announced that the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) is bringing driver's license services to customers in places where they are already doing business, and one of those locations is at the Hy-Vee in Waukee, 1005 E. Hickman Road.

Twenty four locations including libraries, Hy-Vee stores, and a Kum & Go around the state now house Motor Vehicle self-service kiosks which allow Iowans to renew or replace their driver's license and identification cards. The kiosks are identical to those currently found in the Ankeny driver's license station. A complete list of kiosk locations, as well as traditional driver's license issuance sites can be found at www.iowadot.gov/mvd/ods/dlsites.htm. An image of the kiosk can be found [here](#).

"Technology is allowing Iowans secure and convenient access to services," said Branstad. "If your driver's license is up for renewal and you happen to stop for a gallon of milk or are checking out a book at the library, you may be able to take care of the driver's license task in the same trip."

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There are stipulations on who can renew a driver’s license or ID card online due to public safety and identity security concerns. With some exceptions, you can renew at a kiosk if:

- You have a valid Iowa driver’s license or ID (not a commercial driver’s license).
- You are at least 18, but younger than 70 years old.
- Your license or ID card has not been expired for more than a year.
- It is less than 180 days to the renewal date on your current driver’s license or ID card.
- You are a U.S. citizen and an Iowa resident
- You do not have any medical or vision conditions that would impact your ability to drive.

Graphic

Iowa Department of Transportation drivers license renewal kiosk slated to come to Waukee.

Load-Date: June 9, 2015

End of Document

Iowa gas tax increase begins Sunday

The Quad-City Times (Davenport, Iowa)

February 26, 2015 Thursday

_01 Edition

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Section: Pg. 1

Length: 469 words

Byline: Rod Boshart Times Bureau

Body

DES MOINES — With little fanfare Wednesday, Gov. Terry Branstad signed a fuel tax increase that will boost prices at Iowa pumps for gasoline and diesel by 10 cents per gallon beginning Sunday.

"I know it's not easy, and I know that there also are people who feel strongly on the other side, but there is a critical need for additional funding for our roads and bridges in the state of Iowa," Branstad told reporters a short time before he received Senate File 257 and signed it into law after a quick review.

The six-term governor approved the measure less than a day after it was passed by the Senate and House.

"I believe that the leadership deserves credit for working together on a bipartisan basis to pass a piece of legislation that I think will be very beneficial to meeting the needs of the counties and cities as well as the state transportation network," the governor said.

"I think nobody's satisfied exactly, but that's the nature of a significant issue like this," Branstad added.

In less than a three-hour span Tuesday, the Legislature passed a transportation funding bill that is expected to generate more than \$200 million annually to help address a yearly shortfall in money to address critical upgrades to roads and bridges in Iowa.

The measure passed the Iowa Senate 28-21, and the Iowa House 53-46. In the Senate, 16 of 26 Democrats and 12 of 23 Republicans voted for the increase. In the House, 23 of 43 Democrats and 30 of 56 Republicans supported the proposal.

Along with increasing the state's fuel tax by a dime a gallon, the measure will boost the excise tax on aircraft fuel two cents, increase single-trip permit fees, place restrictions on the authority for cities and counties to bond for transportation upgrades using property tax revenue and make other changes.

Iowa's fuel tax has not been increased since 1989. Motorists currently pay a state fuel tax of 21 cents a gallon for regular gasoline, 19 cents on each gallon of ethanol-blended gasoline and 22.5 cents per gallon for diesel fuel. Each penny increase in the state gas tax would raise \$23 million in revenue.

Branstad told reporters Wednesday that the March 1 implementation date will mean that additional tax collections will flow into the state road use tax fund for four months of the current fiscal year. Expectations are that a dime increase in tax revenue on every gallon of gasoline and diesel sold at Iowa pumps will generate between \$18 million and \$20 million per month.

The six-term GOP governor said it would be up to the state Transportation Commission to decide how that additional money would be applied to the state's transportation program, but he indicated he has had discussions with Iowa Department of Transportation Director Paul Trombino about expediting projects yet this fiscal year, which ends June 30.

Load-Date: March 13, 2015

End of Document

Branstad signs gas tax increase, goes into effect March 1

Muscatine Journal (Iowa)

February 25, 2015 Wednesday

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Section: STATE-AND-REGIONAL

Length: 724 words

Byline: Rod Boshart Gazette Des Moines Bureau 5152437220 rod.boshart@thegazette.com

Body

DES MOINES, Iowa — With little fanfare Wednesday, Gov. Terry Branstad signed a fuel tax increase that would hike prices at Iowa pumps for gasoline and diesel by 10 cents per gallon beginning on Sunday.

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Rep. Gary Carlson, R-Muscatine, voted in favor of the bill.

"The gas tax, which is not a perfect tax, by any stretch of the imagination, the one advantage it has is it's constitutionally protected. It goes into the Road Use Tax Fund, so it is a tax that I believe the monies will do what they are intended to do," Carlson said. "If we fail to do some funding, then the only recourse for cities and counties is to do bonding. I think that's a dangerous fiscal practice. ... The gas tax is more of a user tax."

Rep. Bobby Kaufmann, R-Wilton, also voted in favor of the bill.

Sen. Chris Brase, D-Muscatine, voted against the measure.

"A 10-cent increase is really going to hit our poverty-level people," Brase said. "I was really concerned about that. And the fact that it does address the \$215 million shortfall, but it's short-term. Eventually we're going to have to address it again. I just wish we would have taken the time to figure out a long-term plan. ... I just thought there was more we could have done."

Rep. Tom Sands, R-Columbus Junction, also voted against it.

Along with increasing the state's fuel tax by a dime a gallon, the measure will boost the excise tax on aircraft fuel two cents, increase single-trip permit fees and make other changes.

Iowa's fuel tax has not been increased since 1989. Motorists currently pay a state fuel tax of 21 cents a gallon for regular gasoline, 19 cents on each gallon of ethanol-blended gasoline and 22.5 cents per gallon for diesel fuel. Each penny increase in the state gas tax would raise \$23 million in revenue.

Load-Date: February 26, 2015

End of Document

10 hike?

Des Moines Register

January 29, 2015 Thursday

1 Edition

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Section: A; Pg. 18

Length: 1141 words

Byline: By, William Petroski

Body

Iowa motorists could soon be paying 10 cents more per gallon for gasoline and diesel fuel under bills key lawmakers believe have a strong chance of winning approval.

The proposed fuel tax hike could be voted on in the Iowa House and Senate in the coming weeks, and could be implemented within the next few months, said Sen. Tod Bowman, D-Maquoketa, and Rep. Josh Byrnes, R-Osage, who both chair legislative transportation committees.

"It has to be a bipartisan solution," Bowman said about the bills that are being drafted. "We are going to work together, hand in hand, and I think we are really close to having a piece that we agree on, and that hopefully our leadership will agree on."

For a person who drives 15,000 miles per year in a vehicle that gets 25 miles per gallon, the proposed tax increase would cost \$60 annually.

Byrnes said he hopes lawmakers will vote on the fuel tax increase in February to avoid conflict with other issues as the 2015 session progresses. He urged about 200 people at a Transportation Day meeting at the Iowa Capitol on Wednesday to lobby their legislators in support of a fuel tax increase.

The revenue gained from the fuel tax would be used to help plug a \$215 million funding gap to meet the most critical needs on Iowa's 114,000-mile road system, where many aging roads and bridges need repairs, according to state studies. Iowa now spends about \$2 billion annually on its road system, but a report issued in 2013 found that 12 percent of the state's major roads were in poor condition and 26 percent of Iowa's bridges were structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. County engineers say many rural bridges throughout Iowa are closed or posted for weight limits because of a lack of money for bridge repairs.

Scott Newhard, executive vice president of the Associated General Contractors of Iowa, who has seen lawmakers repeatedly reject fuel tax increases in past legislative sessions, said he is more optimistic than ever that a fuel tax hike can win approval this year.

What is different this session is that legislative leaders in both parties, as well as Gov. Terry Branstad, are trying to find solutions to the funding shortfall, Newhard said. In addition, a steep decline in gasoline prices, coupled with a public recognition of problems on Iowa's road system, is building support for a fuel tax increase, he said.

Newhard said the "right chemistry" is there to win approval for a fuel tax increase in the Republican-controlled House. But in the Senate, "we are probably looking for a couple more Republicans" to support the bill, he said. Senate Majority Leader Michael Gronstal, D-Council Bluffs, has said he won't permit a vote on a fuel tax increase unless it's done with bipartisan support.

Tea party activists and anti-tax groups are likely to express strong opposition to any fuel tax increase. Iowans for Tax Relief, based in Muscatine, issued a statement earlier this month saying legislators and special interest groups that endorse a gas tax increase would like to take the easy way out and raise taxes on everyone.

"Iowans for Tax Relief believes the average Iowan already pays a big amount in fuel taxes and registration fees, despite the fact that their vehicles create little wear and tear on Iowa's roads. Iowans for Tax Relief believes it is inequitable and wrong to continue to tax all Iowans for damage to roads caused by a few specific industries," the organization said.

David Scott, executive director of the Iowa Good Roads Association, a highway lobby group, told the Transportation Day gathering that legislators have run out of excuses to avoid voting in favor of a fuel tax increase. He said the road funding issue has been repeatedly studied over the years, and the only thing that has changed is that more money is needed to maintain the road system.

"When you talk with legislators today, tell them they can't kick the can down the road any more. They can't wait any more," Scott told the crowd, which included many city and county officials and business lobbyists.

\$80

If you drive 20,000 miles a year and average 25 miles a gallon, you would pay an additional \$80 a year, or about \$7 a month.

21¢

The current tax on regular gas is 21¢, while the tax on ethanol blend is 19¢ and diesel is 22.5¢.

Backers optimistic bipartisan support of proposed fuel tax increase will push measure through in Iowa House, Senate in coming weeks

¢

Gas tax at a glance

HISTORY: Iowa's gas tax was last raised in 1989, which means the increased costs of road and bridge construction have outpaced the growth of revenue to pay for highway projects, state officials say. The current per-gallon fuel tax rates are: diesel, 22.5 cents; regular gasoline, 21 cents; and ethanol-blended gasoline, 19 cents. Motorists also pay federal taxes on fuel.

POLLING: The Des Moines Register's Iowa Poll conducted early last year found that 58 percent of adults surveyed opposed a 10-cent increase in gas taxes to help pay for road and bridge repairs. Forty percent supported the idea, and 2 percent weren't sure. However, the 40 percent support for a fuel tax increase represented an 11-point swing in favor of a gas tax hike since February 2011, when just 29 percent of those polled were in favor. It was the third consecutive year the Iowa Poll had shown an increase in public support for raising the gas tax.

REVENUE: Paul Trombino, director of the Iowa Department of Transportation, said an immediate 10-cent per gallon fuel tax increase would generate close to \$215 million a year initially. But he said the revenue is projected to decline in the years ahead as vehicles become more fuel efficient. However, other revenue options could be considered to meet any additional funding gap. A fuel tax increase is important for economic development because many companies consider infrastructure a top priority in making decisions on determining sites for investment, Trombino said.

ISU expert: Consumer effect

of gas tax hike modest

COSTS WOULD VARY: The impact of a 10-cent per gallon gasoline tax increase probably wouldn't cost as much as some Iowans think, Iowa State University economist Dave Swenson said.

For example, if you drive 20,000 miles a year and average 25 miles a gallon, you would pay an additional \$80 a year, or about \$7 a month, Swenson said. On the high end, someone driving 30,000 miles in a gas-guzzling vehicle averaging 10 miles a gallon would shell out an extra \$300 a year. Meanwhile, a person driving 10,000 miles a year in a fuel-efficient car averaging 40 miles a gallon would pay \$25 more annually.

SAYS TAX HIKE IS OVERDUE: "The gas tax has not been adjusted for a very long time and the consequences of that have been pretty harsh for the state's road infrastructure," Swenson said. "An increase is overdue, and there is broad-base support among a wide range of interests in the state of Iowa."

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End of Document

Iowa leaders discussing gas tax increase

The Quad-City Times (Davenport, Iowa)

January 8, 2015 Thursday

All Edition

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Byline: Erin Murphy

Dateline: Des Moines IA USA

Body

DES MOINES — The governor and top state lawmakers gathered Wednesday to discuss options for generating enough revenue to fund Iowa's pressing road and bridge maintenance needs.

The meeting was called a first step in determining whether state officials can agree on a method to cover the estimated annual road construction shortfall of more than \$200 million.

Representatives of the governor and legislative leaders called Wednesday's meeting "candid" and "constructive."

"I continue to believe that there's broad, deep, bipartisan support for this. It's probably the best opportunity to get it done," said Senate Majority Leader Mike Gronstal, D-Council Bluffs, prior to the Wednesday afternoon huddle.

Top state lawmakers say within their parties there is both support for and opposition to raising the gas tax. They, along with Gov. Terry Branstad, repeatedly have said any proposal must have bipartisan support before it is presented in the Capitol.

"Certainly, a number of people in my caucus oppose an increase in the fuel tax at this point in time. I think that's true of all four caucuses," Gronstal said. "But I think there's also some people who recognize there are real transportation challenges in the state of Iowa. Iowa used to be the envy of the Midwest when it came to roads, and we're now toward the bottom of that. So I think it's time to do that."

Multiple recent national studies have shown Iowa has some of the worst bridges in the country, and state and local governments say they do not have enough funds to address those construction and repair needs.

A 2011 state study showed Iowa must generate an additional \$215 million annually to fully fund its most pressing road and bridge construction and repair needs.

Branstad instructed Transportation Department director **Paul Trombino** to generate a list of potential methods for generating more state revenue for infrastructure funding. Most measures barely chip away at the annual deficit; the most productive solutions involved some form of a gas tax increase.

In the past, legislators have been reticent to raising the gas tax, which last was raised in 1989. But with increased attention to the state's infrastructure needs and plummeting gas prices — the statewide average Wednesday was \$2.01, exactly half what it was in July 2008, according to AAA — legislative leaders say the time is right for a gas tax increase.

Because raising taxes can have political consequences, those leaders have said any proposal must have support from both parties.

"Let's see if we can build a consensus and find a majority in both houses of the Legislature that can agree on certain things. Then, everybody will have some ownership in it, and hopefully, we prevent it from becoming a political football," Branstad said. "I believe that the opportunity is there to work with both houses in the Legislature on this issue, and I'm very hopeful this is the year that we can accomplish it."

Lawmakers are getting some political cover from outside business groups that have expressed support in finding a way to generate more revenue for transportation funding.

Still to be worked out is exactly how that revenue will be generated.

Gronstal insists it must be a user fee that is paid for not only by Iowans but out-of-state drivers who use Iowa roads. Branstad also said the revenue should be generated on a "pay-as-you-go" basis.

Branstad also floated the possibility of a 1 percent local option sales tax on fuel purchases, similar to the 1 percent sales tax and 1 percent school infrastructure tax already in place.

Legislative leaders were lukewarm to that notion Wednesday but did not dismiss it entirely.

"I think there's a growing recognition that the state needs to address the deficiencies in some of our roads and in particular bridges across rural Iowa," said Senate Minority Leader Bill Dix, R-Shell Rock. "How that gets done remains a bit of a mystery, I think, at this point. But I know that we're interested in having these conversations and trying to find some solutions that address those problems."

Multiple legislators have said they want Branstad to take the lead on the issue. Branstad said he does not wish to back a specific proposal, to avoid creating "a target to shoot at." He said he will present a menu of options and ask legislators in both parties which pieces they and their party can support.

Wednesday's meeting was the first step in that process. Legislative leaders said they will take the ideas back to their caucuses and constituents to find out what steps lawmakers can support.

The governor and leaders have agreed to meet again in the coming weeks.

LEGISLATIVE PREVIEW

The Times Des Moines Bureau is previewing the 2015 Iowa legislative session in a series that began Sunday.

TODAY: Transportation

FRIDAY: Human services

SATURDAY: Hot button issues

SUNDAY: Tax policy

Load-Date: January 8, 2015

Guess Which State Is About To Put Driver's Licenses On Smartphones

The Huffington Post

December 12, 2014 Friday 8:40 PM EST

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Length: 537 words

Byline: Maxwell Strachan

Body

Dec 12, 2014 (The Huffington Post:<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/> Delivered by Newstex)

We're creeping ever closer to a world in which you don't need to carry a wallet.

The state of Iowa will release a free smartphone app in 2015 that can be used in place of a physical driver's license. If the state moves fast enough, it could be the first in the country^[1] to release such an app, according to The Des Moines Register.

"It is basically your license on your phone," Iowa Department of Transportation Director **Paul Trombino** said on Monday during a budget hearing. The app will be optional -- Iowans can still opt to use a regular driver's license card. (It's probably also a smart idea to continue to carry around your original license anyway, in case your smartphone battery dies.)

A mockup of the digital driver's license. The head will actually move a little. (Source: iowa.gov)

Digital driver's licenses are just the latest thing moving out of our wallets and onto our phones. Money-transfer systems like Apple Pay^[2] and Venmo^[3] make it that much easier to survive without carrying cash or cards. The Iowa DOT is promoting the driver's license app as a way to eventually limit fraud of all sorts, including the production of fake IDs. People will verify their identity using a PIN code to open the app. The app is still very much in the development phase, Mark Lowe, director of the motor vehicle division for the Iowa DOT, told The Huffington Post. He noted that many of the security issues are getting worked out. Lowe said that one of the greatest concerns that the public has expressed about the idea is that law enforcement officers might ask to see someone's driver's license app, only to poke through other things on the smartphone. Officers aren't legally allowed to do that, Lowe said. But to make sure people feel safe, they're creating a button that will allow officers to see the license without gaining access to anything else on the phone. Paul Steier, director of the Iowa Bureau of Investigation and Identity Protection, told HuffPost that the state may eventually allow people to only carry a digital license, doing away with their plastic card once and for all. "We see that as an option -- that someone could say I only want my driver's license digitally, please," Steier said. The app could also become much more than just a digital driver's license. The plan is to eventually integrate a number of other services into the app, like weather and driving alerts, or even the ability to access your personal record. H/T Gizmodo^[4]

This article originally appeared on The Huffington Post http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/12/12/smartphone-drivers-license_n_6311766.html

[1]: <http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/politics/2014/12/08/iowa-digital-smartphone-drivers-license/20114979/%20?ncid=txtlnkusaolp00000603> [2]: <https://www.apple.com/iphone-6/apple-pay/?ncid=txtlnkusaolp00000603> [3]: <http://qz.com/277509/read-what-happens-when-a-bunch-of-over-30s-find-out-how-millennials-handle-their-money/?ncid=txtlnkusaolp00000603> [4]: <http://gizmodo.com/iowa-is-going-to-let-you-use-a-smartphone-as-your-drive-1669796842%20lt;p?ncid=txtlnkusaolp00000603gt;lt;pgt;>

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AP top news in Iowa at 3:58 p.m. CST

Associated Press State & Local

December 9, 2014 Tuesday 11:00 PM GMT

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Section: STATE AND REGIONAL

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Body

Iowa reassigns associate AD, citing partner's case

IOWA CITY, Iowa (AP) - The University of Iowa is reassigning senior associate athletic director Jane Meyer, saying she cannot remain in the department while her partner sues the school for discrimination.

Meyer is the partner of former Iowa women's field hockey coach Tracey Griesbaum, who is planning a lawsuit contending that she and other gay female coaches have faced bias based on gender and sexual orientation. Meyer had been the senior woman administrator, a role in which she is charged with ensuring women's programs are treated fairly, and oversaw the department's construction projects.

Athletic director Gary Barta said in a memo last week that keeping Meyer in the position she's held since 2001 "has presented many challenges" in recent months as the department prepares to defend against Griesbaum's claims. He wrote that an assistant attorney general advised that Meyer be reassigned "until these matters are resolved."

University spokesman Joe Brennan said Tuesday that Meyer remains in good standing and the transfer will not affect her \$173,000 annual salary. He said the school is trying to "identify a new set of duties for her outside the athletics department" but doesn't know what those will be.

Griesbaum's attorney, Tom Newkirk, questioned whether the transfer was illegal retaliation. He said the reassignment puts pressure on Griesbaum to either drop her potential legal claims or to destroy her partner's career as an athletic administrator.

"It smacks of a plan to place pressure on Tracey to give up her fight," Newkirk said. "When they say Jane has to be out of the department until Tracey gets her situation resolved, what that means is Tracey either has to give up or Jane's got to stay out for what is effectively going to be two to four years. That's the average length of a dispute with the state of Iowa."

Attorney general's office spokesman Geoff Greenwood said he cannot comment on legal advice given to agencies.

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Dead mayor's wife bequeaths \$100,000 for fountain

MOUNT PLEASANT, Iowa (AP) - A woman has bequeathed \$100,000 for the upkeep of a fountain named in honor of her husband, a Mount Pleasant mayor who was fatally shot in a 1986 City Council meeting.

Mayor Edd King died and two council members were seriously wounded after authorities said Ralph Davis walked into the council chambers as a meeting was ending and began shooting.

City officials said Davis complained about a sewer backing up into his basement and was unhappy with officials' explanations about widespread sewer problems in the community. Davis was sentenced to life in prison and died in 1999.

Before King died, he had wanted the City Council to replace a deteriorating fountain in a Mount Pleasant park.

"On his desk the night he died was an agenda for the next year, and a new fountain for Central Park was on it," said King's niece, Mary Hassenfritz. "He had been traveling to other towns to find a fountain that would fit our city park."

Officials raised \$85,000 to install a new fountain and dedicated it in his honor in 1988.

"It was very important to my aunt and to the city, I think, to get the money to build it and maintain it," said Michael Hammond, a nephew of the Kings.

Official: Iowans will use app to show license

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) - Need to show your driver's license? In Iowa, there will soon be an app for that.

A smartphone app that's under development will allow users to show the digital license to law enforcement officers during traffic stops and at security checkpoints at Iowa airports, according to Paul Trombino, director of the state Department of Transportation. The free app will be available sometime in 2015.

"We are really moving forward on this," he said to Gov. Terry Branstad during a state agency budget hearing Monday. "The way things are going, we may be the first in the nation."

Trombino said users will use a pin number for verification, The Des Moines Register reported (<http://dmreg.co/1z3jODu><http://dmreg.co/1z3jODu>).

"Having this really allows people to protect their identity," he said, and suggested that the technology could be used for other state licenses.

Residents will still be able to use a regular, plastic driver's license. But for those who use the digital version, Trombino said it "is basically your license on your phone."

Iowa is one of more than 30 states that allow drivers to show their proof of insurance via an electronic device. Trombino said a mobile driver's license is logical because of people's reliance on the technology.

Judge declares mistrial in roommate slaying case

FORT DODGE, Iowa (AP) - A judge declared a mistrial Tuesday in the case of a Georgia man charged with first-degree murder in the death of a roommate whose skeletal remains were found in an Iowa basement in 2012.

Judge Gary McMinimee ordered the mistrial in the case of 55-year-old John Green, of Blairsville, Georgia, according to the Fort Dodge Messenger (<http://bit.ly/1yyYtPH>). Green was accused of killing 58-year-old Mark Koster, whom he briefly lived with in 2009.

Koster was reported missing in 2010 and declared dead in 2011. Koster's remains were found buried in the basement of his Sac City home in 2012 after new homeowners began renovations.

Green, who was arrested in northern Florida in March, has pleaded not guilty.

McMinimee made his decision after Sac City Police Chief John Thomsen testified that investigators interviewing suspects "minimize the crime" because "bad people" don't want to admit their roles.

Defense attorney Charles Kenville objected to the phrase "bad people," which he argued mischaracterized his client.

McMinimee agreed, saying it wasn't possible to clarify the question or strike Thomsen's answer.

DOT: lowans will use app to show driver's license

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) - Transportation officials say Iowa residents will soon use a smartphone app to show their state driver's license.

The state Department of Transportation says an app under development will allow users to show the digital license to law enforcement officers during traffic stops and at security checkpoints at Iowa airports. The Des Moines Register reports (<http://dmreg.co/1z3jODu><http://dmreg.co/1z3jODu>) Iowa residents will still be able to use a regular driver's license.

DOT Director Paul Trombino told Gov. Terry Branstad during a state agency budget hearing Monday that the free app will be available sometime in 2015. He also said the app will be highly secure and people will be able to protect their identity.

Information from: The Des Moines Register,
<http://www.desmoinesregister.com>[http://](http://www.desmoinesregister.com)

Load-Date: December 10, 2014

End of Document

AASHTO Board Elects Wyoming's John Cox President and Iowa's Paul Trombino Vice President ...

Association, Organization and Government News

December 2, 2014 Tuesday 2:04 PM EST

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Length: 585 words

Body

Dec 02, 2014 (Association, Organization and Government News: Delivered by Newstex)

CHARLOTTE, N.C. - The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Board of Directors today elected Wyoming Department of Transportation Director John Cox as the association's president. Iowa Department of Transportation Director Paul Trombino III was elected vice president.

"I am honored to accept this important leadership role at a time when AASHTO is celebrating its Centennial year," said Cox. "AASHTO has been there from the beginning, providing leadership to build the national transportation system we rely on today. As we enter our second century, AASHTO's work is far from over. The nation's aging transportation systems need to be maintained and modernized and that's going to require greater investment."

As president, Cox says his primary emphasis will be to advance a multi-year surface transportation reauthorization that closely reflects AASHTO's policy objectives.

"Gaining passage of this essential piece of legislation cannot be accomplished by AASHTO alone," Cox said. "Just as we've done in the past, the transportation community must work together with members of Congress and the American people to build consensus behind legislative proposals that can and must be enacted into law."

Cox's second emphasis area will be to explore the need to identify and advance reasonable opportunities to enhance state decision-making authority and limit federal regulation.

Cox was appointed director of the Wyoming Department of Transportation by former Gov. Dave Freudenthal. He was reappointed Director in 2011 by current Gov. Matt Mead.

Cox recently completed terms as AASHTO vice president and president of the 18-state Western Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.

Cox, who served 28 years in law enforcement, was the commanding officer of the Wyoming Highway Patrol from 1998-2005. Cox is a graduate of the FBI National Academy and he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice Administration.

AASHTO Vice President Paul Trombino III was appointed director of the Iowa Department of Transportation in May 2011. Prior to this position, Trombino worked at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for 17 years holding several positions, including director of the Bureau of Transit, Local Roads, Rails and Harbors. Trombino also spent four years in the finance and banking industry in Chicago and Washington, D.C. Trombino earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) is the 'Voice of Transportation' representing State Departments of Transportation in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. AASHTO is a nonprofit, nonpartisan association serving as a catalyst for excellence in transportation. Follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/aashtospeaks>[1].

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[1]: <http://twitter.com/aashtospeaks>

Load-Date: December 2, 2014

End of Document

Isenhardt: Response to EPA formed in private

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, IA)

October 31, 2014 Friday

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Section: A; Pg. 3

Length: 543 words

Byline: Thomas J. Barton TH staff writer , thomas.barton@thmedia.com

Body

A Dubuque lawmaker claims Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad failed to consult legislative leaders and lowans working for improved water quality before sending a letter on a proposed rule designed to clarify which waterways fall under federal oversight.

Rep. Chuck Isenhardt, D-Dubuque, said a letter that Branstad and other state leaders sent earlier this month to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on the so-called "Waters of the U.S." rule was developed in private. Isenhardt said it was crafted with no input from state legislators or two bodies created by the General Assembly to help with state water policy - the Watershed Planning Advisory Council and the Water Resources Coordinating Council.

An updated definition of "Waters of the United States" under the federal Clean Water Act was proposed by the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers in April.

Iowa Farm Bureau Federation and other agriculture groups oppose the EPA rule, saying it would extend the federal agency's authority by giving it oversight of farm field ditches, ponds, streams and wetlands.

The agency has repeatedly said the rule does not expand its authority and normal farming practices still are exempted under the proposal.

In his letter, Branstad said seven state agencies developed the comments "following comprehensive stakeholder input." The letter also is signed by Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds, Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey, state agency leaders Debi Durham, Chuck Gipp, Paul Trombino III and Mark Schouten, and Elizabeth Jacobs, chairwoman of the Iowa Utilities Board.

Isenhardt, a ranking member on the House Environmental Protection Committee and a liaison to the Watershed Planning Advisory Council, contends Branstad has held private meetings on the issue since April 1, "three weeks before the draft rule was released."

Neither lawmakers nor lowans on the water-quality boards were invited to attend, he wrote in a letter to the EPA.

"The letter does not represent the views of the Iowa General Assembly," Isenhardt wrote. "... Therefore, the letter offers - at best - an incomplete picture of the views of relevant state government entities and appears not to be informed at all by views of organizations which embrace clean water as a primary mission."

Jimmy Centers, a Branstad spokesman, said the governor and lieutenant governor met with a "broad group of affected parties" over several months about the proposed rule, including a Sept. 29 meeting organized by Homebuilders

Association of Iowa. A coalition of agriculture, business and government officials that included members of the Watershed Planning Advisory Council participated, according to a list of attendees provided by the governor's office.

Isenhardt said he shares some of the governor's concerns about the rule, "but I don't share the letter's assumptions or conclusions, much less its negative political tone."

Branstad said the proposed rule is "fatally flawed" and asked it be withdrawn, claiming it will curtail voluntary water-quality improvement projects due to the costs and delay for farmers and small cities and towns seeking federal permits.

"The proposed rule confuses federal control with environmental protection," he wrote. "The state of Iowa believes that environmental protection is best driven locally."

Load-Date: October 31, 2014

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BRANSTAD, REYNOLDS, NORTHEY AND STATE OFFICIALS SUBMIT COMMENTS ON FEDERAL "WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES" PROPOSED RULE

States News Service

October 16, 2014 Thursday

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Length: 841 words

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Dateline: DES MOINES, Iowa

Body

The following information was released by the office of the governor of Iowa:

Proposed federal rule will impose barriers to the advancement of innovative, state- and local-driven conservation practices that would advance our common goal of water quality

Gov. Terry E. Branstad, Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds and Secretary Bill Northey, along with relevant state leaders, today sent a letter and submitted comments to United States Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Gina McCarthy and Army for Civil Works Assistant Secretary Jo-Ellen Darcy on the proposed "Waters of the United States" federal rule under the Clean Water Act (CWA).

"The overriding concern of a diverse group of impacted stakeholders, including state leaders, is that the proposed rule will impose significant barriers to the advancement of innovative, state- and local-driven conservation and environmental practices that would actually advance our common goal of water quality," the letter reads. "Because the proposed rule is fatally flawed, we request that it be withdrawn and that future rulemaking be appropriately coordinated with States and relevant stakeholders. We agree that clean water requires good, clear, well-designed regulations - unfortunately, the ones currently being proposed are not."

The letter outlines four key concerns from relevant stakeholders:

Disregard for states' lead role under the CWA to protect and promote water quality

Section 101(b) of the CWA clearly states that, "it is the policy of the Congress to recognize, preserve, and protect the primary responsibilities and rights of States to prevent, reduce, and eliminate pollution, to plan the development and use (including restoration, preservation and enhancement) of land and water resources"

The proposed rule confuses Federal control with environmental protection. The State of Iowa believes that environmental protection is best driven locally.

A disconnect between content and intent

The Federal government's proposed approach, and the content of the proposed rule, would seriously impair advancements in water quality in the State of Iowa. As an example, too many Iowa farmers would be forced to gain Federal permits to advance water quality infrastructure projects, which would discourage agricultural producers from undertaking the very projects that would improve water quality throughout the State.

Increased uncertainty from the proposed federal rule

The proposed rule increases, rather than decreases uncertainty for various stakeholders. The proposed rule is more ambiguous than current law and promises to be tied up in litigation for years to come, creating uncertainty within conservation interests, industries and communities across the state.

Underestimation of costs of the burdensome proposed federal rule

Permitting compliance costs will siphon finite resources that would better be used to advance conservation best practices and infrastructure in Iowa's countryside. Permitting delays would also increase the costs of conservation and economic development projects. Additional costs would impact public transportation projects, renewable energy projects, electricity distribution, disaster recovery projects, mitigation projects, and so on. Every day those projects are delayed has real costs that are currently unaccounted for by the Federal government. There would also be additional enforcement costs that current staffing levels at both the Federal and State levels are not positioned to meet. The rule as proposed would essentially be an unfunded mandate on State agencies tasked with CWA enforcement.

The letter concludes, "The Federal governments proposed rule seems to be more concerned with asserting Federal control over local water bodies than actually improving local water quality. Thus, we were encouraged recently by the bipartisan support in the United States House of Representatives to block the advancement of this flawed rule. Those concerns were similarly echoed in a bipartisan fashion by the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture members who unanimously called on the Federal government to withdraw the rule. We strongly urge you to listen to the consensus concerns of the States, including Iowa, and withdraw this rule."

The Director of Iowa Department of Natural Resources Chuck Gipp, Director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority Debi Durham, Director of Iowa Department of Transportation Paul Trombino III, Chair of the Iowa Utilities Board Libby Jacobs and Director of Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Mark Schouten joined Branstad, Reynolds and Northey in signing the letter.

State of Iowa leaders care deeply about water quality. Since 2011, new General Fund appropriations for water quality related initiatives have increased by 26%. In just the last two years (FY 14 and FY 15), over \$50 million dollars were allocated to support water quality related state initiatives. This historic level of investment does not even include the cost-share dollars spent by farmers, landowners and communities on these efforts.

Load-Date: October 20, 2014

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THE IOWA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY 37TH BASIC ACADEMY GRADUATION

States News Service

February 28, 2014 Friday

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Dateline: Johnston, IOWA

Body

The following information was released by the Iowa Department of Public Safety:

Today, Friday, February 28, 2014, 12 men and women will become sworn peace officers for the State of Iowa at the 37th Iowa Department of Public Safety Academy Graduation. They will serve their communities as Troopers with the Iowa State Patrol and Motor Vehicle Enforcement Officers with the Iowa Department of Transportation.

WHAT:37th Academy Commencement Exercises

WHO: 12 Academy Graduates

Governor Terry Branstad

Commissioner Larry Noble, Department of Public Safety

Director Paul Trombino III, Iowa Department of Transportation

WHERE:Freedom Center Iowa Army National Guard

Camp Dodge, Johnston

WHEN:Friday, February 28, 2014

1:30 p.m.

If you have any further questions, please contact Sergeant Scott Bright at (515) 745-2863.

Load-Date: February 28, 2014

End of Document

OUR OPINION: More transportation money should mean more Highway 20 money

Sioux City Journal (Iowa)
January 29, 2014 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS

Length: 419 words

Body

Forty-four miles between Merville and Early.

That's what's left before Highway 20 is four lanes across the state of Iowa.

So close ... but still \$375 million short.

What will it take to expedite completion of this key Siouxland project, whose roots trace back more than 50 years?

In our view, the key to finishing Highway 20 lies in a greater investment in roads and bridges as a whole by the state of Iowa. In other words, more money for transportation infrastructure should mean more money for Highway 20.

The four-laning of Highway 20 will be the focus of a meeting today, Transportation Day at the Statehouse, in Des Moines. Supporters again will make their case to Iowa Department of Transportation leaders, including Director Paul Trombino.

Part of their strategy at the Capitol should include putting pressure on state leaders to do something about the overall, growing need for more transportation money.

As we said in a pre-legislative session editorial earlier this month, we believe a greater financial commitment to transportation infrastructure should be the signature issue in Des Moines this year.

According to the DOT, the annual deficit between road and bridge needs and the revenue available to meet them is almost \$1.5 billion; for critical needs, more than \$250 million.

We continue to support an increase in the gas tax. The state's Road Use Tax Fund is a stable, Constitution-protected source of revenue for transportation infrastructure which hasn't been raised in 25 years and ranks in the bottom third among states. One of the biggest advantages to raising the gas tax is the fact it puts the burden of generating more dollars for roads and bridges on out-of-state, as well as in-state users.

House and Senate Transportation Committee leaders met with Gov. Terry Branstad on Monday about more funding for roads and bridges, but forged no consensus. Branstad continues to reference options he's exploring with Trombino; those options should be presented to the Legislature next week. We look forward with interest to hearing about them.

Bottom line: Whether it's the gas tax or a package of alternatives, something needs to happen - this year.

What our state can't afford to do is push this issue off for another year. That solves nothing and won't help Highway 20 get done faster.

"It's inexcusable for our elected leaders to make a deplorable situation worse by not acting," Shirley Phillips, president of the U.S. 20 Corridor Association, said in a Sunday Journal story.

We couldn't agree more.

Graphic

Highway 20 near Early

Load-Date: February 11, 2014

End of Document

BRANSTAD, REYNOLDS SEND RFS COMMENTS TO PRESIDENT OBAMA, EPA

States News Service

January 29, 2014 Wednesday

Copyright 2014 States News Service

Length: 1688 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: DES MOINES, Iowa

Body

The following information was released by the office of the governor of Iowa:

Gov. Terry Branstad and Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds today sent a letter to President Barack Obama and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Gina McCarthy submitting comments and studies that support a robust Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS). The submission, which includes comments from Democrats and Republicans across the Midwest, comes on the final day the EPA will accept comments on their proposed rule to roll-back the RFS.

Branstad and Reynolds write, "We write to strongly encourage you to revise and increase the proposed U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) volume obligation levels to thresholds that will demonstrate your continued commitment to growing the production and use of renewable fuels. A robust RFS is needed to provide the Federal policy predictability that rural America needs to continue investments in the renewable fuels that diversify our nation's energy portfolio, clean the air, provide value-added opportunities to various bio-stocks, give consumers lower-cost choices at the fuel pump, and create good paying jobs that empower rewarding careers."

The letter continues, "As state leaders, we are keenly focused on helping create a business and public policy environment that drives job growth throughout the State - in communities both large and small, urban and rural. We share the concerns of many Iowans and citizens throughout the Midwest that the EPA's current proposal will erode the healthy and stable agricultural economy in rural America and abandon the various public policy benefits that flow from the RFS."

The letter includes comments from Iowa's entire Congressional Delegation, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey, Iowa Economic Development Authority Director Debi Durham, Iowa Department of Natural Resources Director Chuck Gipp, Iowa Department of Transportation Director Paul Trombino, Indiana Lt. Governor Sue Ellspermann, Minnesota Department of Agriculture Commissioner Dave Fredrickson, South Dakota Secretary of Agriculture Lucas Lentsch, Nebraska Department of Agriculture Director Greg Ibach, Iowa Farm Bureau President Craig Hill, in addition to local farmers and business leaders.

The letter concludes, "We appreciate your past support on renewable fuels and the commitments you have pledged. We hope you will protect the RFS, renew your commitment, and stand strong along with us, consumers, and agricultural producers in supporting American-made renewable fuels."

The full letter can be viewed here or below:

January 28, 2014

The Honorable Barack Obama The Honorable Gina McCarthy

President of the United States Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Washington, DC 20500 Washington, DC 20460

Re: Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OAR-2013-0479

Dear President Obama and Administrator McCarthy:

We write to strongly encourage you to revise and increase the proposed U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) volume obligation levels to thresholds that will demonstrate your continued commitment to growing the production and use of renewable fuels. A robust RFS is needed to provide the Federal policy predictability that rural America needs to continue investments in the renewable fuels that diversify our nation's energy portfolio, clean the air, provide value-added opportunities to various bio-stocks, give consumers lower-cost choices at the fuel pump, and create good paying jobs that empower rewarding careers. Specifically, we ask your Administration to increase the biodiesel volume to 1.7 billion gallons, modify the cellulosic level to match production expectations, and to reinstate the conventional renewable fuel target to 14.4 billion gallons since there is no domestic supply shortage. The gradually increasing RFS levels have been an important part of diversifying our nation's transportation fuels and reducing fuel costs at the pump.

On January 23, 2014, we hosted the "Hearing in the Heartland" in cooperation with the entire Iowa congressional delegation, state leaders, interested citizens and community leaders from across the Midwest. At this open forum where all interested citizens were invited to present, we heard from 83 panelists from across the Midwest Region that spoke from the heart about the importance of the RFS to their livelihoods and a healthy rural economy; only two individuals presented in opposition to a robust RFS. As you can see by the numbers, there is overwhelming consensus in the Heartland for the EPA to reverse course on its draft proposal and reject Big Oil's attempt to get rewarded for bad behavior. The bipartisan support at the forum mirrored the strong bipartisan support that led to the initial passage of the RFS provisions, which aim to promote the development of a domestic renewable fuels industry. The RFS, which enables gradually increasing amounts of renewable fuels to be included in nation's fuel supply, is one of the best recent examples of a policy success that has come out of Washington, DC.

As state leaders, we are keenly focused on helping create a business and public policy environment that drives job growth throughout the State - in communities both large and small, urban and rural. We share the concerns of many Iowans and citizens throughout the Midwest that the EPA's current proposal will erode the healthy and stable agricultural economy in rural America and abandon the various public policy benefits that flow from the RFS. For decades, the agricultural economy lurched from crisis to crisis and farmers often depended on government subsidies to stay afloat. The RFS helped brighten the future of the agricultural sector by providing a stable policy framework that gives value-add opportunities for various agricultural commodities, while helping clean air objectives - a true win-win. In recent years, there has been renewed interest in agriculture among young people given the hope that follows stable policy, innovation, and technological advancement.

In many ways, the agriculture economy has been a bright spot in the national economy over the last five years and the draft RFS proposal would jeopardize the health of the economy in rural America. Put simply, continuing with the current EPA proposal would create a negative counterbalance to your Administration's work in the White House Rural Council.

During the "Hearing in the Heartland", there were many references to recent data analyses, not utilized in the EPA's draft regulations, that we believe provide you the opportunity and obligation to refine the draft EPA proposal. We have enclosed a document entitled "State of Iowa RFS Proposal Comments: Legal Concerns, Current Data and

Perspective from the Heartland" which shares legal concerns on the EPA proposal, sources for relevant recent analyses, and perspectives of citizens from across the Midwest.

If the EPA's currently proposed rule becomes final, the negative impact would be disproportionately felt by rural America. According to an Iowa State University estimate, corn prices alone could drop twenty-five cents per bushel based on the proposed rule, which could bring corn prices below the cost of production for many farmers. The proposed EPA rule could also cause a ripple effect on agri-business, our communities, and the entire economy. Despite Big Oil's attempt to pollute the public discourse, corn prices are now close to \$4 per bushel, down significantly from the 2012 drought levels of \$8 per bushel.

We want to address the fuel versus food argument and environmental questions that often enter the discussion on renewable fuels. At the height of the drought, the ethanol industry was assailed for causing increases in food costs. If this argument was true, then why have food prices not plummeted now that corn is nearly half the price it was during the drought? Renewable fuel critics often ignore the fact that a modern dry-mill ethanol refinery produces 17.5 pounds of highly valuable DDGs from one bushel of corn which is utilized by cattle producers throughout the Midwest. Critics also claim that the RFS has driven more acres into production and increased fertilizer demand. However, the truth is quite the contrary. Total U.S. cropland planted to corn in the 1930's was 103 million acres versus the 97 million acres in 2013, and thanks to improved agricultural practices and the precision of modern technologies and applications, the use of fertilizer has decreased substantially in recent decades.[1] In short, thanks to the productivity of America's farmers and the innovation in the agricultural and renewable fuel sectors, we can both feed and fuel the world.

If the EPA's proposed rule stands, consumers across America would be limited in their choices at the pump. When consumers have choices, like they do in Iowa, they choose ethanol and other biofuels. The oil companies are preventing fuel choice in other parts of the country and consumers lose, paying much more for fuel. Iowans purchased more than 3.61 million gallons of E85 in the third quarter of 2013, nearly double the 1.83 million gallons of E85 purchased in the first quarter of 2013 and up from the 2.62 million gallons of E85 sold in the second quarter, according to Iowa Department of Revenue data. Big Oil does not like renewable fuels because they don't control them - but consumers deserve choice.

We urge your Administration to use its regulatory authority in a manner that both supports a growing renewable fuels industry and meets the statutory requirements of the law.

We appreciate your past support on renewable fuels and the commitments you have pledged. We hope you will protect the RFS, renew your commitment, and stand strong along with us, consumers, and agricultural producers in supporting American-made renewable fuels.

Sincerely,

Terry E. Branstad Kim Reynolds

Governor of Iowa Lt. Governor of Iowa

cc: The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture

The Honorable Bill Northey, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture

The Iowa Congressional Delegation

Load-Date: January 31, 2014

Branstad, Reynolds Send Letter to President Obama Urging Action on Propane Shortage

Targeted News Service

January 27, 2014 Monday 3:50 AM EST

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Length: 1207 words

Byline: Targeted News Service

Dateline: DES MOINES, Iowa

Body

Gov. Terry Branstad, R-Iowa, has issued the following news release:

Gov. Terry E. Branstad and Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds today sent a letter to President Barack Obama urging the administration to take action to help ease the burden the propane shortage is putting on Iowans and other Midwesterners.

Branstad and Reynolds write, "We write to share our concern regarding the shortage of propane fuel across the Midwest, including Iowa. With the lack of supply and increased demand during recent cold weather, propane prices have drastically increased. This has negatively impacted Iowa families, businesses, and agricultural producers across the State of Iowa."

The letter continues, "We urge the U.S. Department of Transportation to expand the exemption to the hours-of-service regulations to ease the movement of propane fuel to customers in states facing shortages. We would also welcome actions by the U.S. Department of Energy to reduce regulatory barriers to expedite the shipments of propane via all modes of transportation, including rail and pipeline. In addition, we urge you and your Administration to examine current propane market forces and consider exercising your authority outlined in 42 U.S.C. section 6212 to ensure there is a sufficient domestic supply."

The letter sent to President Obama comes after Gov. Branstad and Lt. Gov. Reynolds worked with Texas Gov. Rick Perry and Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst to ease restrictions in Texas, allowing for greater propane supply to be shipped to states in need.

Iowans who may need aid from the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) should contact their local LIHEAP community action agency or the Iowa Department of Human Rights at 515-281-0859. Eligibility requirements for LIHEAP can be found here (http://www.dcaa.iowa.gov/bureau_EA/whos_eligible.html).

The full text of the letter to President Obama is below.

January 27, 2014

The Honorable Barack Obama

President of the United States

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.

Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We write to express our concern regarding the shortage of propane fuel across Iowa, the entire Midwest, and expanding to other parts of the United States. With the lack of supply and increased demand due to recent cold weather, propane prices have drastically increased. This has negatively impacted Iowa families, businesses, and agricultural producers across the State of Iowa. Prices in some Midwest locations have now exceeded \$5 per gallon. Such prices are unsustainable for families, farmers, and businesses. Iowa, like many states across the nation, have taken actions to address the situation and now your Administration's leadership is needed to ensure that the necessary propane fuel is available for our fellow citizens to heat their homes, livestock producers to warm their animals, and businesses to fuel their operations.

We urge the U.S. Department of Transportation to expand the exemption to the hours-of-service regulations to ease the movement of propane fuel to customers in states facing shortages. We would also welcome actions by the U.S. Department of Energy to reduce regulatory barriers to expedite the shipments of propane via all modes of transportation, including rail and pipeline. In addition, we urge you and your Administration to examine current propane market forces and consider exercising your authority outlined in 42 U.S.C. section 6212 to ensure there is a sufficient domestic supply. We are closely monitoring needs of communities throughout the state. If emergency deliveries of propane are deemed necessary, we would ask for your Administration's help in addressing such an emergency situation through close coordination and adequate Federal resources. Further, if propane prices do not return to sustainable levels in the very near future, it will be necessary to explore the adequacy of current resource allocations in Federal programs such as the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the Rural Energy for America (REAP) programs. Finally, we would echo requests for the Federal Trade Commission to remain vigilant in its oversight responsibility to prevent anti-competitive behavior or illegal manipulation.

Iowa leaders are actively working to mitigate the current shortage in various ways. State of Iowa actions include:

* **Easing of State Transport Regulations and Active Monitoring:** The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and the Governor's office are actively monitoring propane supplies and prices. Working in conjunction with the Iowa Homeland Security Emergency Management Department (HSEMD) and the Iowa Department of Transportation, the Governor issued an emergency declaration to ease propane transport within the State of Iowa on Oct. 25, 2013 - the declaration has been and will be extended further as needed. State officials have been coordinating with our counterparts in other states, including seeking regulatory relief for licensing, permitting and certification requirements regarding liquefied petroleum gas trucks and operators in states that can help expedite the supply of propane - for example, Governor Branstad and Lt. Governor Reynolds reached out to Texas officials and asked for regulatory transport relief which was granted on January 22, 2014. Last week, the Governor's Office asked the Midwest Governor's Association to drive collaboration across state lines. The HSEMD is actively monitoring propane issues in other states across the country to assist relevant planning scenarios. In addition, HSEMD is in contact with local emergency managers to actively monitor the situation in counties and communities across the State, especially rural Iowa.

* **Providing Flexibilities in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP):** The Iowa Department of Human Rights (DHR) has allocated an additional \$600,000, now totaling \$1.8 million, in Emergency Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP) funds within LIHEAP to local agencies and raised the maximum ECIP payment from \$500 to \$650 for emergency propane delivery. The DHR is working with local LIHEAP agencies and propane vendors to lower minimum delivery requirements to no more than 200 gallons and emphasizing to agencies that an allowable cost under ECIP includes the purchase of an electric portable heater. DHR has changed policy to allow a portion of a household's ECIP benefit to be applied to a secondary vendor to help cover the costs of electricity for the use of portable electric heaters and is actively coordinating with the Iowa Propane Gas Association. DHR has actively encouraged families in need to contact their local community action agency to apply for LIHEAP.

We would welcome your Administration's active engagement on the propane shortage issue here in Iowa and throughout the Midwest. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Terry E. Branstad

Governor of Iowa

Kim Reynolds

Lt. Governor of Iowa

cc: Bill Northey, Secretary, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship

Paul Trombino III, Director, Iowa Department of Transportation

San Wong, Iowa Department of Human Rights

Mark Schouten, Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management

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Load-Date: January 28, 2014

End of Document

STATE OF IOWA EXPANDS GOVERNMENT PAYMENT PARTNERSHIP WITH DWOLLA; IOWA DOT BEGINS USING SERVICE FOR IFTA AND IRP

States News Service

January 6, 2014 Monday

Copyright 2014 States News Service

Length: 714 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: DES MOINES, Iowa

Body

The following information was released by the office of the governor of Iowa:

Gov. Terry Branstad today announced the continuation of Iowa's state government payments partnership with Dwolla, the Internet's first payment network. Today's announcement allows carrier customers of the Iowa Department of Transportation to use Dwolla when filing and paying International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) returns and International Registration Plan (IRP) fees. As the only online payment option for the nearly 55,000 annual transactions, the new partnership provides the state and its tax payers a streamlined online process and turnaround time, an alternative to costly card payments and mailed checks, and a reduction in clerical errors and administrative costs.

The State of Iowa announced its first partnership with Dwolla in early 2013. It allowed retailers to pay more than \$100 million in cigarette stamp taxes through the Iowa Department of Revenue. In July 2013, nearly a dozen Iowa counties began accepting the low-cost payment network for their individual vehicle registration and property taxes.

"Reducing the size and cost of government must also mean a more innovative, business and taxpayer friendly government," said Branstad. "The State of Iowa has seen success in our partnership with Dwolla and the Department of Revenue. Expanding our partnership to the Department of Transportation will help our citizens and modernize the way government does business."

[Click here](#) to learn more about Iowa state's 2013 government payments partnership with Dwolla.

"Dwolla's simple payment network brings an effective, innovative means of payment for Iowa taxpayers, while providing increased government efficiency," said Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds. "We're excited about the state's expanded use of Dwolla and are continuing to explore new ways to use the payment network."

Iowa DOT Director **Paul Trombino III**, said, "Nearly 7,000 motor carriers in Iowa have been able to complete IFTA and IRP paperwork online for several years, but they have not been able to complete the payment portion of the transaction online until now. That was causing many of them to continue to file paper returns, which have a greater opportunity for errors. We think using Dwolla will reduce the number of errors and streamline the filing process for these transactions."

The ability to complete the entire transaction online has many benefits to both Iowa's motor carrier customers and the Iowa DOT. Mark Lowe, director of the Iowa DOT's Motor Vehicle Division, said, "Because motor carriers had to print the document and send us a check anyway, many of them did not take advantage of the online system. By making it easier and more cost effective to pay fees and taxes, we are reducing the cost of the transaction, both for the customer and the state, and effectively increase the revenue collected."

The online service completes several complicated calculations automatically, drastically reducing errors that can hold up the documents from being accepted. Receiving the documents online will help the DOT process the returns much more quickly and efficiently. Lowe added, "Dwolla' brings the whole thing together by offering carriers an online payment option that is inexpensive and avoids credit card processing fees, which can be significant for large transactions. I think this is the first of many opportunities that the Iowa DOT will explore using Dwolla."

[Click here to learn more about Dwolla and government payments.](#)

Dwolla is a new payment network that bypasses traditional credit and debit card networks, providing online and mobile payments. The benefits of using Dwolla include:

Cheaper than sending a check. Dwolla is only 25 cents per transaction or free for transactions \$10 or less. There are no hidden costs or licensing fees for its members or integrations.

Many uses. Individuals, businesses, and nonprofits use the online service and its mobile app everyday to send money, buy goods, pay invoices, collect payments, and make donations.

Security. By simply eliminating the visibility and circulation of this sensitive data between the members of the network, Dwolla removes a significant source of fraud risk.

Simple. Simply sign into your existing account at checkout, enter your PIN, and initiate a payment.

Load-Date: January 9, 2014

End of Document

Idaho: Lawmakers: No bipartisan consensus on gas tax increase

US Official News

December 10, 2013 Tuesday

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Length: 546 words

Dateline: Boise

Body

Department of Transportation, The State of Idaho has issued the following press release:

A key Senate leader said Friday that Democrats had the votes to pass a state gas tax increase last session but that the bipartisan measure stalled due to lack of support among legislative Republicans.

Senate President Pam Jochum, D-Dubuque, told an Iowa Taxpayer Association forum “we had the votes lined up on our side” for a proposal to phase in a fuel tax boost of up 10 cents a gallon over several years, “but it just didn’t happen.”

Jochum said there was an agreement that there would have to be a proportional amount of bipartisan support – 14 Democrats and 13 Republicans in the Iowa Senate and 28 Republicans and 24 Democrats in the Iowa House – for a politically volatile issue like raising the state gas tax. She said Senate Democrats worked hard to get the votes to do that but there was not enough GOP support.

House Speaker Kraig Paulsen, R-Hiawatha, said it was his “understanding there wasn’t 26 votes in the Senate” where Democrats hold a 26-24 majority, but he dodged questions regarding where the vote count in a gas tax increase stood in the House, which is run by Republicans with a 53-47 majority.

“I’m not going to tell you my vote card, if that’s what you’re asking me for,” he said.

Paulsen said some of the revenue-raising ideas suggested by state transportation director **Paul Trombino** likely will get discussion next session but that a proposal to end an exemption for farmers on fuel they use to run their equipment likely would not advance. The ideas under study -- which include increased fees, tax swaps and other proposals -- are designed to pump money into a “critical” infrastructure repair backlog the Iowa Department of Transportation estimates at \$215 million a year.

“There is no consensus at this point in time,” the House Speaker said.

On the income tax side, Paulsen told the taxpayer group he would welcome changes to cut personal income and corporate taxes for Iowans next session and advocated an idea backed by Gov. Terry Branstad to offer the option of

a flat tax with limited deductions for taxpayers who did not want to stick with the current arrangement that allows federal taxes to be deducted on state returns.

“We think it’s time to do an income tax cut in the state of Iowa,” Paulsen said.

However, Jochum said corporate taxes aren’t on her agenda next session and Senate Republican “have never been fond of a flat tax” that is regressive, adding, “If we’re going to address income tax in this state, we really need to figure out how to reduce the amount of tax paid by middle-income families. They earn the least, but they pay the highest percent of their income in tax.”

Paulsen said he expects 2014 will be an “accelerated” session that takes initial steps to encourage jobs for returning veterans and expand broadband access, moves that set up additional action in 2015. He said last year’s session produced several “home runs” in property tax, health care and education reforms but that 2014 will be more about “singles or doubles.”

“We’ll get some good things done,” he said. “They probably won’t be as dramatic as what we got done last year. They will set things up for 2015.”

For further information please visit: <http://apps.itd.idaho.gov/>

Load-Date: December 10, 2013

End of Document

Iowa lawmakers: No bipartisan consensus on gas tax increase

The Tribune (Ames, Iowa)

December 8, 2013 Sunday

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Section: NEWS,NEWSNEWS,NEWS

Length: 516 words

Byline: Rod Boshart The Gazette

Body

ALTOONA - A key Senate leader said Friday Democrats had the votes to pass a state gas tax increase last session but the bipartisan measure stalled due to lack of support among legislative Republicans.

Senate President Pam Jochum, D-Dubuque, told an Iowa Taxpayer Association forum "we had the votes lined up on our side" for a proposal to phase in a fuel tax boost of up 10 cents a gallon over several years "but it just didn't happen."

Jochum said there was an agreement that there would have to be a proportional amount of bipartisan support - 14 Democrats and 13 Republicans in the Iowa Senate and 28 Republicans and 24 Democrats in the Iowa House - for a politically volatile issue like raising the state gas tax. She said Senate Democrats worked hard to get the votes to do that but there was not enough GOP support.

House Speaker Kraig Paulsen, R-Hiawatha, said it was his "understanding there wasn't 26 votes in the Senate" where Democrats hold a 26-24 majority but he dodged questions regarding where the vote count in a gas tax increase stood in the House run by Republicans with a 53-47 majority.

"I'm not going to tell you my vote card, if that's what you're asking me for," he said.

Paulsen said some of the revenue-raising ideas suggested by state transportation director Paul Trombino likely will get discussion next session, but proposal to end an exemption for farmers on fuel they use to run their equipment likely would not advance. The ideas under study - which include increased fees, tax swaps and other proposals - are designed to pump money into a "critical" infrastructure repair backlog the Iowa Department of Transportation estimates at \$215 million a year.

"There is no consensus at this point in time," the House speaker said.

On the income tax side, Paulsen told the taxpayer group he would welcome changes to cut personal income and corporate taxes for Iowans next session and advocated an idea backed by Gov. Terry Branstad to offer the option of a flat tax with limited deductions for taxpayers who did not want to stick with the current arrangement that allows federal taxes to be deducted on state returns.

"We think it's time to do an income tax cut in the state of Iowa," Paulsen said.

However, Jochum said corporate taxes aren't on her agenda next session and Senate Republican "have never been fond of a flat tax" that is regressive, adding "if we're going to address income tax in this state, we really need to figure out to reduce the amount of tax paid by middle-income families. They earn the least but they pay the highest percent of their income in tax."

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"We'll get some good things done," he said. "They probably won't be as dramatic as what we got done last year. They will set things up for 2015."

Load-Date: December 8, 2013

End of Document

Lawmakers: No consensus on gas tax

The Gazette (Cedar Rapids, Iowa)

December 7, 2013 Saturday

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Section: Pg. 2A

Length: 448 words

Byline: By Rod Boshart, GAZETTE DES MOINES BUREAU

Body

ALTOONA -- A key Senate leader said Friday that Democrats had the votes to pass a state gas tax increase last session but the bipartisan measure stalled because of lack of support among legislative Republicans.

Senate President Pam Jochum, D-Dubuque, told an Iowa Taxpayer Association forum "we had the votes lined up on our side" for a proposal to phase in a fuel tax boost of up to 10 cents a gallon over several years "but it just didn't happen."

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"There is no consensus at this point in time," the House speaker said.

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"We think it's time to do an income-tax cut in the state of Iowa," Paulsen said.

However, Jochum said corporate taxes aren't on her agenda next session, adding "if we're going to address income tax in this state, we really need to figure out how to reduce the amount of tax paid by middle-income families. They earn the least but they pay the highest percent of their income in tax."

Paulsen said he expects 2014 will be an "accelerated" session that takes initial steps to encourage jobs for returning veterans and expand broadband access that set up additional action in 2015.

I Comments: (515) 243-7220; rod.boshart@sourcemedi.net

Load-Date: January 6, 2014

End of Document

Iowa: Iowa DOT to host ceremony celebrating the I-235 lane safety improvements in Windsor Heights Dec. 12

US Official News

December 5, 2013 Thursday

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Length: 181 words

Dateline: Des Moines

Body

Department of Transportation, The State of Iowa has issued the following news release:

Iowa DOT to host ceremony celebrating the I-235 lane safety improvements in Windsor Heights Dec. 12

Members of the media are invited to attend a celebration to commemorate the Interstate 235 lane safety improvements in Windsor Heights to be held at 1 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 12.

The event will be held in the Windsor Heights Community and Events Center in Colby Park, 6900 School St. A short program, remarks from Iowa DOT and Windsor Heights representatives, and a ceremonial ribbon cutting will highlight the event.

Iowa DOT Director Paul Trombino III said the ribbon cutting highlights the improved safety features included in the interchange modifications. He said, "The completion of this project provides motorists with a safer roadway and more efficient system in this community."

Windsor Heights Mayor Pro Tem Diana Willits added, "We continue to look forward to working with the Iowa DOT to ensure safety is a top priority in our city."

For further information please visit: <http://www.news.iowadot.gov/>

Load-Date: December 6, 2013

End of Document

SYMPOSIUM ADDRESSES ADAPTING TO EXTREME WEATHER IN IOWA

States News Service

November 12, 2013 Tuesday

Copyright 2013 States News Service

Length: 413 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: IOWA CITY IA

Body

The following information was released by the University of Iowa:

December event will examine costs of climate change in the state

By:

Leslie Gannon

Over the past few years, Iowa has been experiencing swings from one weather extreme to another. Scientists and others say the climactic fluctuations are expensive and impact Iowa agriculture, businesses, government, and people. A symposium next month will examine the challenges and costs the state faces in adapting to extreme weather.

The symposium, Adapting to Weather Extremes: the Economic Impact in Iowa, will be held on Dec. 11 at Hy-Vee Hall in Des Moines. It is sponsored by the University of Iowa Public Policy Center, with support from the Iowa Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research. Co-sponsoring the event are the UI Center for Global and Regional Environmental Research, the UI's IIHR Hydroscience and Engineering, the Iowa Water Center, Iowa State University's Climate Science Program, and the UI School of Urban and Regional Planning.

The objectives of the symposium are to:

Better understand the current and future challenges facing Iowa due to extreme weather.

Identify leading challenges to key sectors of Iowa's economy affected by extreme weather, the costs of these impacts, and how these sectors are mitigating and adapting to change.

Facilitate productive discussions among government and business leaders, policy makers and citizens about strategies for mitigating and adapting to extreme weather.

Generate policy options for adapting to weather extremes in Iowa.

State government presenters include:

Bruce Rastetter, president, Board of Regents, state of Iowa

Bill Northey, secretary of Agriculture, state of Iowa

Chuck Gipp, director, Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Paul Trombino III, director, Iowa Department of Transportation

Mark Schouten, director, Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management

Nick Gerhart, insurance commissioner, state of Iowa

Leading faculty and researchers from Iowa State University and the UI will share their relevant work, and state policy makers will discuss the implications for future policy in Iowa.

The cost is \$25 and includes lunch, \$10 for students. Advance registration is required.

Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to attend all UI-sponsored events. If you are a person with a disability who requires a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this symposium, contact Leslie Gannon in advance at 319-335-6817 or at leslie-gannon@uiowa.edu

Load-Date: November 12, 2013

End of Document

Iowa View: Cameras aren't a magic bullet

Des Moines Register

October 24, 2013 Thursday

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Section: COLUMNISTS - OPINION

Length: 659 words

Byline: By, Paul Trombino III

Body

There have been a lot of conversations lately regarding the use of automated traffic enforcement devices and who has the right to control their placement on the primary road system - the interstates, U.S. and Iowa routes. These red-light cameras or speed cameras are in use by 10 cities and counties in Iowa.

Over the past few years, the number of jurisdictions that have installed cameras and the number of locations where they have been installed increased significantly. No formal standards have been set as to how and when the use of automated traffic enforcement in Iowa is appropriate. To bring clarity and consistency to the use of automated traffic enforcement on the primary road system, the Iowa Department of Transportation has proposed administrative rules.

There has been much confusion and misinformation surrounding those proposed rules.

When the safety of the traveling public is in question, all officials with a stake in that particular location, whether it be city, county or state, have a vested interest in assuring that area is safe for our travelers. The proposed automated enforcement rules encourage the creation of partnerships between the Iowa DOT and local jurisdictions to review all factors that affect safety on the highway system, not just controlling speed or the running of red lights.

True safety is rarely achieved by one method alone.

The proposed rules encourage other engineering and enforcement solutions to be explored and implemented prior to using an automated traffic enforcement system. Red-light or speed cameras should rarely be used as a long-term solution to safety or the revenue used as ongoing funding for public services.

The Department of Transportation does not have the authority to use or operate any red-light or speed camera system, nor does the Iowa DOT receive any of the fines collected from the systems. Working together is the best way to assure that safety. As local jurisdictions resist the proposed red-light or speed camera rules, you have to wonder if their motivation is truly safety or revenue (\$20 million collected in fiscal year 2013).

It has been suggested the data evaluation proposed in the automated traffic enforcement rules will take a long time and hold up the process of improving safety. However, isn't the job of the Iowa DOT, local jurisdictions and law enforcement to make sure we are reviewing all data for a given location and doing the right things to protect the safety of the public?

The proposed review determines all potential safety countermeasures that would make the area safer. Some solutions are low cost and are quick to install, while others may be very expensive and take years to implement. But in the end, it is a comprehensive approach that will work on a variety of levels to improve safety.

In our review of research reports throughout the nation, at best it is not clear that red-light or speed cameras are resolving safety concerns. In some cases, they are having negative safety effects. Further, automated traffic enforcement systems assess fines against the owner of the vehicle rather than the driver.

These civil fines will never appear on the driver's record. As result, this means a vehicle can repeat the same offense every day with no consequences for the driver. These issues can lead to public distrust and are likely some of the reasons why only eight states, including Iowa, use speed cameras and many states have enacted laws to ban them completely.

The Iowa DOT is simply looking to provide a process that cities and counties use when they want to install these systems. This process allows the DOT to provide an independent, objective level of oversight when automated traffic enforcement systems exist on the primary highway system.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

PAUL TROMBINO III has been director of the Iowa Department of Transportation since 2011. Previously, he worked for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Contact: Paul.**Trombino**@dot.iowa.gov

Load-Date: October 24, 2013

End of Document

IDOT to Sioux City: Show us proof traffic cameras work

Sioux City Journal (Iowa)

October 2, 2013 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS

Length: 474 words

Byline: ROD BOSHART Journal Des Moines Bureau

Body

SIOUX CITY | City officials would have to justify using traffic safety cameras to the state under a proposal the Iowa Department of Transportation introduced Wednesday.

The plan, which hasn't received approval, also would limit use of the devices to places with a history of crashes and to school zones. The guidelines would apply to cameras on state highways and roads, but not county or municipal streets.

Sioux City has speed cameras on Interstate 29 and red-light cameras at 11 intersections, including some state routes. Cedar Rapids, Davenport, Fort Dodge, Muscatine and several Polk County jurisdictions also use the devices.

The cameras, which snap photos of violations automatically, have been criticized for being in place only to generate money from fines. The Iowa Legislature considered restricting use of traffic cameras in the last session but lawmakers didn't take action.

State Transportation Director **Paul Trombino** on Wednesday said the new rules would create clear parameters for when cameras are appropriate.

"I think right now it's very hard to see. At times, from my perspective, I think it is a disguise from a safety perspective and it's really about revenue," he said. "I think even some of the communities have acknowledged it in some cases."

Sioux City police Capt. Mel Williams on Wednesday said he had not seen the proposal, so he couldn't comment on specifics.

"I believe that cities and not necessarily the state of Iowa should be able to determine how safe they want their streets to be."

If the plan is approved, the city would have to send annual reports to the state about the effectiveness of the cameras.

Five of the Sioux City red-light cameras are on state routes.

Sioux City police officials have previously said the devices improve safety by making motorists more aware. Collisions at the intersections with red-light cameras dropped nearly 50 percent between July 2009 and July 2012, city data shows.

The proposed guidelines would require that officials examine other engineering and enforcement options for handling traffic issues before new cameras are installed. The devices couldn't be a long-term solution.

"Our belief is that automatic traffic enforcement systems should be used as a last resort after other safety measures have been exhausted," Trombino said.

The rules do not establish a uniform fine schedule, which is a local ordinance issue, he said.

The new rules are scheduled to be considered by a legislative panel next week and then go out for public comment. The guidelines could start in February if approved.

The public comment period ends Oct. 31. Anyone interested in sharing thoughts can send comments to Tracy George, Iowa Department of Transportation, Office of Policy and Legislative Services, 800 Lincoln Way, Ames, IA 50010.

Journal reporter Nick Hytrek contributed to this report.

Graphic

Red light camera

Load-Date: October 3, 2013

End of Document

Gov. Branstad talks gas tax, manufacturing in Mount Ayr

The Creston News Advertiser (Iowa)

October 2, 2013 Wednesday

Copyright 2013 The Creston News Advertiser

Distributed by McClatchy-Tribune Business News

Section: STATE AND REGIONAL NEWS

Length: 557 words

Byline: Bailey Poolman, The Creston News Advertiser, Iowa

Body

Oct. 02--MOUNT AYR -- Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad and Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds visited Mount Ayr Tuesday for a town hall meeting, and Branstad touched on local issues of gas taxes, infrastructure and manufacturing.

Gas tax

"Resistance to the gas tax is really strong," Branstad said. "The public is against it, about two to one. Plus, gas prices -- now they've gone down a bit lately -- but gas prices are extremely high, and it's a burden for people to commute to work. So, we're looking at other things that we can do that would provide money for the road-use tax fund other than the gas tax."

The gas tax was a piece of legislation voted on in February, but not passed. It would have raised gas prices eight cents to bring in \$200 million needed for infrastructure repair across the state.

One main idea Branstad mentioned was to replace the gas tax with an excise tax, which is similar to a sales tax.

An excise tax is a tax on the sale or production of a specific good used for a specific activity within the country. In this case, fuel is the specific good and is used for transportation. Excise taxes are different from sales taxes in that they are higher, per unit and for more specific products.

Another idea Branstad mentioned was to give counties the option of keeping an extra one cent on the excise tax, and the money made from that extra cent would go toward local road funds.

"These are all ideas, and we have said, 'Let's go out and talk to legislators and see what kind of support there is, talk to the public and see what kind of interest there might be.' And he (Paul Trombino, Iowa Department of Transportation director) is going to be doing that over the next several months," Branstad said.

Manufacturing

In light of the closing of Gits Manufacturing plant in Creston, Ringgold County citizens were concerned about what is being done to keep manufacturing companies in Iowa.

"We recognize the importance of manufacturing and reducing the commercial industrial taxes hopefully should help," Branstad said. "We are also trying to reduce some of the regulatory burdens to make Iowa more attractive."

Branstad said unemployment in Iowa has gone down, from 6 percent to 4.9 percent, and with it, the unemployment tax in Iowa has gone down approximately \$100 million each year in the past two years.

"We're not going to win every one of those (companies leaving), and that's the reason why we have a goal of 200,000 new jobs, because there's always going to be some companies going out of business or going elsewhere," said Branstad. "For the ones we're losing, we're also gaining some significant ones."

Reynolds said the Branstad administration is trying to reduce regulatory and environment taxes to allow businesses to expand and new businesses to locate in the state.

"We're also starting to see opportunities for significant investment back in the state of Iowa, too," said Reynolds. "A great deal of it is export, and we've got a lot of companies that have companies over in various countries that we travel to, but that's really allowing them to expand their businesses here in Iowa, in addition to that. But we are bringing investment back into the state, too."

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Load-Date: October 3, 2013

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LT. GOVERNOR REYNOLDS ANNOUNCES "RIDING THROUGH HISTORY" EXHIBIT OPENING FRIDAY

States News Service

July 15, 2013 Monday

Copyright 2013 States News Service

Length: 791 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: DES MOINES, Iowa

Body

The following information was released by the office of the governor of Iowa:

Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds today previewed and announced the "Riding Through History" exhibition about the history of cycling in Iowa and "Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa" opens Friday at the State Historical Museum of Iowa.

"Riding Through History" is a 3,000-square-foot exhibition that showcases artifacts, stories, photos and videos about the cycling experience in Iowa and highlights RAGBRAI as one of Iowa's iconic traditions, largest cultural events and economic drivers. The exhibition includes nearly 200 artifacts from the Museum's permanent collection and from cycling enthusiasts across the country, and tells the stories of communities and individuals from RAGBRAI's past.

"With more and more people cycling today as a recreational activity and as their primary mode of transportation, this exhibition provides a terrific opportunity to learn more about its history in Iowa," said Reynolds. "It also showcases RAGBRAI as one of Iowa's largest cultural events and economic drivers. It's a terrific exhibition and I encourage RAGBRAI riders and Iowans to see it while they are in Des Moines."

"The successful development of this exhibition could not have been completed without the strong support of our exhibit partners Register Media, RAGBRAI and the Iowa Department of Transportation," said Susan Kloewer, director of the State Historical Museum of Iowa. "Their support, along with our advisory committee members, has been invaluable in telling the history of cycling in Iowa and RAGBRAI."

"RAGBRAI's co-founder John Karras has said the event is a love affair between bicycle riders and the state of Iowa," RAGBRAI Director T.J. Juskiewicz said. "RAGBRAI is the oldest, largest and longest recreational bicycle tour that attracts cyclists from all over the world seeking to enjoy that great Iowa hospitality. We don't have scenic beaches or mountain vistas, but the state of Iowa delivers 'homemade goodness' you can't find anywhere else on the planet."

The exhibition offers visitors a wide range of artifacts and stories from Iowa cycling history and RAGBRAI, including:

a Thomas Pickering Velocipede purchased by Iowan Wesley Redhead in 1869

a Schwinn Super Sport Van Zimmer purchase with wedding gift money and rode on RAGBRAI in 1974

Chris Cakes - the story of Lorin Christiansen of Pocahontas who developed a full-scale catering business across numerous states out of RAGBRAI

Mr. Pork Chop - the story of Paul Bernhard of Bancroft who became known as "Mr. Pork Chop" after developing a 1.5-inch-thick pork chop that became known as the Iowa Chop.

Clarence Pickard - the story of Clarence Pickard pedaled across Iowa wearing a Styrofoam pith helmet and wool clothing at 83 years old.

The exhibition also showcases the advances made in cycling equipment and technology, and includes safety tips from the Iowa Department of Transportation.

"From assistance for trails to helping riders plan their routes through our interactive bike map, the Iowa DOT is proud to play a part in making the biking experience safe and convenient for all Iowans," said Paul Trombino, III, director of the Iowa Department of Transportation. "This exhibit will give Iowans the chance to learn the history behind what makes our state's biking history unique."

In addition, RAGBRAI riders, friends and all Iowans are invited to "Pedalpalooza" 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday, July 23, 2013, at the State Historical Museum of Iowa as the RAGBRAI route takes riders through Des Moines.

Pedalpalooza will feature live music concerts by Decoy at 11 a.m. and The Nadas at 2 p.m., with Chad Elliott, Bonita Crow, Andy Fleming and David Zollo performing live at various times on the E. Grand and 6th Stage. Food and beverages will be available for purchase from Baratta's Catering and visitors can purchase a "Riding Through History" 16-oz collector cup for only \$5; includes one free beer or soft drink and \$2 refills until 5 p.m. Other family-friendly events and activities will be offered throughout the day, including chair massages from East Village Spa and music by Dan Kelley DJ Service.

"Pedalpalooza" event partners are Register Media, RAGBRAI, Iowa Department of Transportation, Iowa Historical Foundation, Des Moines Bicycle Collective, Dan Kelley DJ Service, FastSigns, Baratta's, East Village Spa, The Nadas and Decoy.

Admission to the State Historical Museum and the "Pedalpalooza" celebration is free. Bike parking available at the Museum. The State Historical Museum is at 600 E. Locust Street in Des Moines. Hours are 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Saturday and Noon-4:30 p.m. Sunday. Admission is free and open to the public. Visit www.ridingthroughhistory.org for more information.

Load-Date: July 17, 2013

End of Document

David Weigel arrested, charged with embezzlement

Nevada Journal (Iowa)

April 25, 2013

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Section: NEWS

Length: 594 words

Byline: Mike Malloy, AMES TRIBUNE

Body

Two men, one a former employee of the Iowa Department of Transportation, have been arrested and charged with embezzling vast sums of money from the department.

David Weigel, 56, of Nevada, was arrested Saturday and charged with first-degree theft, conspiracy to commit theft, ongoing criminal conduct, money laundering and felonious misconduct in office. Also arrested was Grady Marx, 59, of Sioux City. He is charged with first-degree theft, conspiracy to commit a felony, ongoing criminal conduct and money laundering.

The two allegedly stole \$407,430 in various transactions over several years.

The investigation was conducted over the past year-and-a-half by the recently created Iowa Financial Investigation Team of the Iowa Department of Public Safety.

According to its report, Weigel allegedly sold DOT land and kept part of the proceeds. He also allegedly pocketed money from mowing contracts that was intended to be paid to the department. Weigel, who was employed at the DOT from 1995 to 2011, oversaw land acquisitions and sales as well as leasing and renting of DOT-owned areas.

The report includes numerous cases where Weigel allegedly asked people purchasing land to write two checks — one to the DOT and the other to himself. In other cases, the report claims that Weigel asked land purchasers to write two checks, with the second one going to Marx.

The report also states that the DOT issued checks for mowing services that allegedly were not performed. The recipient of that money then allegedly funneled it back to Weigel or one of his family members.

Investigator Adam DeCamp of the Dept. of Public Safety noted in the report that he expects further investigation will reveal that Weigel and Marx allegedly stole much more than the \$407,430 contained in the report.

Gerard Meyers, assistant director of the Iowa Dept. of Criminal Investigations, agreed, noting that his office received a few calls Monday from people who had business dealings with Weigel. While Meyers feels his department “has a pretty good handle” on the number of suspect transactions he admits that there are potentially others yet to be discovered.

Law enforcement is also not finished sorting through a trove of information seized in multiple searches on Saturday morning. Four buildings were searched — Weigel's home in Nevada, a home in Ankeny allegedly purchased by

Weigel with stolen money, Marx' home in Sioux City and a business in Sioux City owned by Marx. Trucks, cars, bank account information and other items were taken and could lead to additional charges or arrests of additional people.

Meyers said the raids were "strategically executed on a Saturday for reasons we're not going to be releasing."

Representatives of the DOT said Director Paul Trombino would not answer questions about the case.

The Iowa Financial Investigation Team includes members from the offices of: the Iowa Attorney General, United States Attorney, State of Iowa Auditor, Homeland Security Investigations, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Dept. of Inspections and Appeals, Iowa Dept. of Revenue, Iowa Insurance Fraud Bureau, Iowa Division of Banking, U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the Iowa Dept. of Public Safety.

Also assisting in Saturday's enforcement efforts were the Nevada Police Department, Story County Sheriff's Office, Woodbury County Sheriff's Office, Sioux City Police Department, Ankeny Police Department and the Iowa Department of Transportation.

Meyers hopes that the team will better be able to pursue various financial fraud cases that rely on individual agencies.

Load-Date: April 30, 2013

End of Document

Iowa: New Iowa Financial Investigation Team to Hold Press Conference; Disclose Details on First Case, Arrests

US Official News

April 23, 2013 Tuesday

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Length: 327 words

Dateline: Des Moines

Body

Department of Public Safety, The State of Iowa has issued the following news release:

Early this morning, teams of law enforcement officers from local, state and federal agencies executed several search warrants for a large-scale theft and money laundering investigation involving a former Department of Transportation (DOT) employee. The employee and several associates are accused of misusing DOT resources for personal, financial gain.

Members of the media and public are invited to attend today's press conference to learn more about the alleged crimes and the newly created Iowa Financial Investigation Team (IFIT).

WHAT: Press Conference on Operation Landlord

WHEN: TODAY!

Saturday, April 20, 2013

3:30 PM

WHERE: Nevada Police Department

1209 6th Street

Nevada, IA 50201

WHO: Assistant Director Gerard Meyers, DCI

Director Paul Trombino, Iowa DOT

This large scale investigation and resulting search warrants and arrests were executed by a team of investigators from multiple agencies. As crimes like fraud, money laundering and theft continue through the use of online banking,

the internet, and traditional means of concealment, IFIT will strive to investigate the misuse of both public and private monies. Participating agencies include: Iowa Attorney General's Office, United States Attorney's Office-Southern District of Iowa, State of Iowa Auditor's Office, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Inspections and Appeals, Iowa Department of Revenue, Iowa Insurance Fraud Bureau, Iowa Division of Banking, US Postal Inspection Service and the Iowa Department of Public Safety.

Also assisting in today's enforcement efforts are the Nevada Police Department, Story County Sheriff's Office, Woodbury County Sheriff's Office, Sioux City Police Department, Ankeny Police Department, and the Iowa Department of Transportation.

For further information please visit: <http://www.dps.state.ia.us>

Load-Date: April 23, 2013

End of Document

Nevada man arrested, charged with embezzling more than \$200,000 from DOT

The Tribune (Ames, Iowa)

April 23, 2013 Tuesday

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Section: NEWS

Length: 531 words

Byline: Mike Malloy Staff Writer mmalloy@amestrib.com

Body

Two men, one a former employee of the Iowa Department of Transportation, have been arrested and charged with embezzling hundreds of thousands of dollars from the department.

David Weigel, 56, of Nevada, was arrested Saturday and charged with first-degree theft, conspiracy to commit theft, ongoing criminal conduct, money laundering and felonious misconduct in office. Also arrested was Grady Marx, 59, of Sioux City. He is charged with first-degree theft, conspiracy to commit a felony, ongoing criminal conduct and money laundering.

The two allegedly stole \$407,430 in various transactions over several years.

The investigation was conducted over the past year and a half by the recently created Iowa Financial Investigation Team.

According to the team's report, Weigel allegedly sold DOT land and kept part of the proceeds. He also allegedly pocketed money from mowing contracts that was intended to be paid to the department. Weigel, who was employed at the DOT from 1995 to 2011, oversaw land acquisitions and sales as well as leasing and renting of DOT-owned areas.

The report includes numerous cases where Weigel allegedly asked people purchasing land to write two checks - one to the DOT and the other to himself. In other cases, the report claims that Weigel asked land purchasers to write two checks, with the second one going to Marx.

The report also said that the DOT issued checks for mowing services that allegedly were not performed. The recipient of that money then allegedly funneled it back to Weigel or one of his family members.

Investigator Adam DeCamp of the Department of Public Safety said in the report that he expects further investigation will reveal that Weigel and Marx allegedly stole much more than the \$407,430 contained in the report.

Gerard Meyers, assistant director of the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation, said his office received a few calls Monday from people who had business dealings with Weigel. While Meyers thinks his department "has a pretty good handle" on the number of suspect transactions, he admits that there are potentially others yet to be discovered.

Law enforcement is not finished sorting through a trove of information seized in multiple searches on Saturday morning. Four buildings were searched - Weigel's home in Nevada, a home in Ankeny allegedly purchased by Weigel

with stolen money, Marx's home in Sioux City and a business in Sioux City owned by Marx. Trucks, cars, bank account information and other items were taken and could lead to additional charges or arrests of additional people.

Meyers said the raids were "strategically executed on a Saturday for reasons we're not going to be releasing."

Representatives of the DOT said Monday that Director Paul Trombino would not answer questions about the case.

The Iowa Financial Investigation Team includes members from the offices of the Iowa Attorney General, United States Attorney, State of Iowa Auditor, Homeland Security Investigations, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Inspections and Appeals, Iowa Department of Revenue, Iowa Insurance Fraud Bureau, Iowa Division of Banking, U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the Iowa Department of Public Safety.

Load-Date: April 23, 2013

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Iowa: Two Arrested After Lengthy Probe by New Iowa Financial Investigation Team

US Official News

April 23, 2013 Tuesday

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Length: 721 words

Dateline: Des Moines

Body

Department of Public Safety, The State of Iowa has issued the following news release:

Beginning at 9:00 AM this morning, law enforcement from multiple state, local and federal agencies executed Operation Landlord with search warrants at four different locations in Story, Polk and Woodbury Counties. Additionally, two individuals were arrested for allegedly stealing more than \$407,430 from the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT).

Today, 56 year old David Weigel of Nevada, Iowa was charged with Theft in the First Degree, Conspiracy to Commit Theft, On-going Criminal Conduct, Money Laundering and Felonious Misconduct in Office. Fifty-nine year old Grady Marx of Sioux City, Iowa was also arrested and charged with Theft in the First Degree, Conspiracy to Commit a Felony, On-going Criminal Conduct, and Money Laundering.

Weigel is currently being held at the Polk County jail on \$55,000 bond. Marx was booked through the Woodbury County Jail and posted his \$50,000 bond shortly thereafter.

David Weigel

David Weigel, 56 years

Grady Marx

Grady Marx, 59 years

The arrests of Weigel and Marx are the result of a two-year long investigation that included a detailed review of hundreds of financial records. On July 7, 2011, DOT Director **Paul Trombino** requested the assistance of the Iowa Department of Public Safety to investigate suspicious activity involving land sales, land leases and mowing contracts for Iowa DOT land. Through the course of the investigation a team of officers and prosecutors trained to investigate financial crimes was assembled from multiple agencies. The newly formed Iowa Financial Investigation Team (IFIT)

discovered through document review and witness interviews that beginning in 1997, David Wiegel used his employment within DOT to personally, financially benefit from his position. Weigel is accused of selling DOT land to various individuals and companies while keeping a portion of the funds. Additionally, he is accused of charging various individuals for maintaining DOT lands, and personally retaining those monies. David Weigel received at least \$239,832 of money that was intended for the DOT.

Also through the investigation, IFIT revealed that Grady Marx conspired with David Weigel to deprive the DOT of at least \$237,360. Marx is accused of receiving payment for the sale of land belonging to the DOT, as well funneling money to Weigel after receiving payment from DOT for the mowing of DOT lands, a business arrangement facilitated by Weigel.

Weigel Complaint & Affidavit

Marx Complaint & Affidavit

During today's enforcement effort, search warrants were executed at four different locations. Items seized as a result of the search warrants include multiple bank accounts, as well as several cars, trucks and motorcycles. Investigative information suggests these items were purchased with money stolen from the DOT by Weigel or Marx.

IFIT is requesting the public's assistance in this case. Individuals who have made check or cash payments to David Weigel, or to individuals or companies other than the DOT, for the purchase or rent of DOT land, may have information that can assist law enforcement in this case. Please call the IFIT office at 515-725-6290.

Iowa Financial Investigation Team This large scale investigation and resulting search warrants and arrests were executed by a team of investigators from multiple agencies. As crimes like elder fraud, money laundering, and theft continue through the use of online banking, the internet, and traditional means of concealment, IFIT will strive to investigate the misuse of both public and private monies. Participating agencies include: Iowa Attorney General's Office, United States Attorney's Office-Southern District of Iowa, State of Iowa Auditor's Office, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Inspections and Appeals, Iowa Department of Revenue, Iowa Insurance Fraud Bureau, Iowa Division of Banking, US Postal Inspection Service and the Iowa Department of Public Safety

Also assisting in today's enforcement efforts are the Nevada Police Department, Story County Sheriff's Office, Woodbury County Sheriff's Office, Sioux City Police Department, Ankeny Police Department, and the Iowa Department of Transportation.

For further information please visit: <http://www.dps.state.ia.us>

Load-Date: April 23, 2013

End of Document

Audit of DOT books shows scope of alleged theft

The Associated Press State & Local Wire

April 22, 2013 Monday 7:28 PM GMT

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Section: STATE AND REGIONAL

Length: 674 words

Byline: By DAVID PITT, Associated Press

Dateline: DES MOINES Iowa

Body

An investigation of Iowa Department of Transportation records revealed more than \$580,000 of uncollected rent, improper disbursements and money diverted to personal bank accounts of a longtime DOT property management employee, the state auditor said Monday.

Auditor David Vaudt's report harshly criticizes the lack of administrative oversight for property management employees and suggests numerous changes to protect public funds. The audit looked at the span of January 1994 to July 2011.

"Based on our observations and procedures performed, we determined DOT failed to exercise proper fiduciary oversight," the report said.

Vaudt said the investigation, conducted by his auditors and the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation, found that DOT employee David Weigel managed to take hundreds of thousands of dollars and perhaps more.

Weigel allegedly deposited more than \$203,680 in his bank accounts and gave another \$100,000 to another man, Grady Marx, the report said. The 56-year-old Weigel, of Nevada, Iowa, and Marx, 59, of Sioux City, were charged Saturday with theft, conspiracy to commit theft, money laundering and criminal conduct.

It's not clear if the men are represented by attorneys. Jail records show Weigel and Marx were released Saturday evening. A message left Monday at a telephone number listed in their names were not immediately returned.

Vaudt said his auditors were unable to determine the source for more than 200 other deposits a total of \$380,965 into Weigel's bank accounts.

"It is possible a portion of these deposits were collections diverted from DOT," the report said.

In a statement, DOT Director **Paul Trombino** said the department expects full prosecution.

"This type of behavior is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated," he said. "I am confident in our DOT team and we are committed to our mission we deliver every day for the citizens and State of Iowa."

The investigation into Weigel's actions began in May 2011 when another DOT employee noticed irregularities in the way land was being sold to Marx. Weigel was placed on administrative leave then resigned July 7, 2011, after an internal investigation found other issues with DOT land management and disposal under his supervision.

A few days later, Trambino requested in a letter to Gov. Terry Branstad an investigation.

The DOT acquires property for highway construction and expansion projects. Once a project is completed, unneeded land is sold, a function overseen by the property management department in which Weigel worked.

Weigel started at the DOT in 1995 and was nearly fired in 1998 for insubordination, lying about activities that were against DOT policy, conducting business as a state employee with a business in which he had an interest and hiring companies in which he had an interest. Instead of firing him, the DOT demoted him. He was reinstated to his original job in June 1999 and then promoted twice.

"If Mr. Weigel had been terminated from employment in 1998 rather than suspended, he would not have been able to carry out any of the transactions summarized ... " the report said.

Vaudt said Weigel also may be improperly receiving Social Security disability benefits and collecting disability payments from Iowa Public Employees' Retirement System.

The audit found a number of other questionable land transactions involving Weigel family members and friends also employed by the DOT including Stephen Banks, who was a DOT intern in 1997 and later became a full-time employee.

Vaudt's audit shows Banks had acquired four tracts of land under a company he set up, and the land was later sold for nearly \$91,000 more than the purchase price.

DOT spokesman Pete Hjelmstad said Banks has been fired and that the department already has made changes to its policies and procedures.

"We made several changes regarding the disposal of excess land, leasing state owned property, and maintaining excess land that more or less put more eyes on the process, just many more checks and balances to make sure nothing like this can happen again," he said.

Load-Date: April 23, 2013

End of Document

TWO ARRESTED AFTER LENGTHY PROBE BY NEW IOWA FINANCIAL INVESTIGATION TEAM

States News Service

April 20, 2013 Saturday

Copyright 2013 States News Service

Length: 747 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: NEVADA, IOWA

Body

The following information was released by the Iowa Department of Public Safety:

Beginning at 9:00 AM this morning, law enforcement from multiple state, local and federal agencies executed Operation Landlord with search warrants at four different locations in Story, Polk and Woodbury Counties. Additionally, two individuals were arrested for allegedly stealing more than \$407,430 from the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT).

Today, 56 year old David Weigel of Nevada, Iowa was charged with Theft in the First Degree, Conspiracy to Commit Theft, On-going Criminal Conduct, Money Laundering and Felonious Misconduct in Office. Fifty-nine year old Grady Marx of Sioux City, Iowa was also arrested and charged with Theft in the First Degree, Conspiracy to Commit a Felony, On-going Criminal Conduct, and Money Laundering.

Weigel is currently being held at the Polk County jail on \$55,000 bond. Marx was booked through the Woodbury County Jail and posted his \$50,000 bond shortly thereafter.

David Weigel, 56 years

Grady Marx, 59 years

The arrests of Weigel and Marx are the result of a two-year long investigation that included a detailed review of hundreds of financial records. On July 7, 2011, DOT Director Paul Trombino requested the assistance of the Iowa Department of Public Safety to investigate suspicious activity involving land sales, land leases and mowing contracts for Iowa DOT land. Through the course of the investigation a team of officers and prosecutors trained to investigate financial crimes was assembled from multiple agencies. The newly formed Iowa Financial Investigation Team (IFIT) discovered through document review and witness interviews that beginning in 1997, David Wiegel used his employment within DOT to personally, financially benefit from his position. Weigel is accused of selling DOT land to various individuals and companies while keeping a portion of the funds. Additionally, he is accused of charging various individuals for maintaining DOT lands, and personally retaining those monies. David Weigel received at least \$239,832 of money that was intended for the DOT.

Also through the investigation, IFIT revealed that Grady Marx conspired with David Weigel to deprive the DOT of at least \$237,360. Marx is accused of receiving payment for the sale of land belonging to the DOT, as well funneling

money to Weigel after receiving payment from DOT for the mowing of DOT lands, a business arrangement facilitated by Weigel.

Weigel Complaint and Affidavit

Marx Complaint and Affidavit

During todays enforcement effort, search warrants were executed at four different locations. Items seized as a result of the search warrants include multiple bank accounts, as well as several cars, trucks and motorcycles. Investigative information suggests these items were purchased with money stolen from the DOT by Weigel or Marx.

IFIT is requesting the publics assistance in this case. Individuals who have made check or cash payments to David Weigel, or to individuals or companies other than the DOT, for the purchase or rent of DOT land, may have information that can assist law enforcement in this case. Please call the IFIT office at 515-725-6290.

This large scale investigation and resulting search warrants and arrests were executed by a team of investigators from multiple agencies. As crimes like elder fraud, money laundering, and theft continue through the use of online banking, the internet, and traditional means of concealment, IFIT will strive to investigate the misuse of both public and private monies. Participating agencies include: Iowa Attorney Generals Office, United States Attorneys Office-Southern District of Iowa, State of Iowa Auditors Office, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Inspections and Appeals, Iowa Department of Revenue, Iowa Insurance Fraud Bureau, Iowa Division of Banking, US Postal Inspection Service and the Iowa Department of Public Safety

Also assisting in todays enforcement efforts are the Nevada Police Department, Story County Sheriffs Office, Woodbury County Sheriffs Office, Sioux City Police Department, Ankeny Police Department, and the Iowa Department of Transportation.

It should be noted a criminal charges is merely an accusation and all suspects are considered innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

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To enroll in the DPS E-mail Notification system simply log on to <https://dpsemailnotify.iowa.gov> and follow the instructions to enroll as a new user.

Load-Date: April 21, 2013

End of Document

NEW IOWA FINANCIAL INVESTIGATION TEAM TO HOLD PRESS CONFERENCE; DISCLOSE DETAILS ON FIRST CASE, ARRESTS

States News Service

March 20, 2013 Wednesday

Copyright 2013 States News Service

Length: 308 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: NEVADA, IOWA

Body

The following information was released by the Iowa Department of Public Safety:

Early this morning, teams of law enforcement officers from local, state and federal agencies executed several search warrants for a large-scale theft and money laundering investigation involving a former Department of Transportation (DOT) employee. The employee and several associates are accused of misusing DOT resources for personal, financial gain.

Members of the media and public are invited to attend today's press conference to learn more about the alleged crimes and the newly created Iowa Financial Investigation Team (IFIT).

WHAT: Press Conference on Operation Landlord

WHEN: TODAY!

Saturday, April 20, 2013

3:30 PM

WHERE: Nevada Police Department

1209 6th Street

Nevada, IA 50201

WHO: Assistant Director Gerard Meyers, DCI

Director **Paul Trombino**, Iowa DOT

This large scale investigation and resulting search warrants and arrests were executed by a team of investigators from multiple agencies. As crimes like fraud, money laundering and theft continue through the use of online banking, the internet, and traditional means of concealment, IFIT will strive to investigate the misuse of both public and private monies. Participating agencies include: Iowa Attorney Generals Office, United States Attorneys Office-Southern District of Iowa, State of Iowa Auditors Office, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Federal Bureau of

Investigation, Department of Inspections and Appeals, Iowa Department of Revenue, Iowa Insurance Fraud Bureau, Iowa Division of Banking, US Postal Inspection Service and the Iowa Department of Public Safety.

Also assisting in todays enforcement efforts are the Nevada Police Department, Story County Sheriffs Office, Woodbury County Sheriffs Office, Sioux City Police Department, Ankeny Police Department, and the Iowa Department of Transportation.

Load-Date: April 20, 2013

End of Document

Iowa transportation chief seeks diversified funding sources

The Quad-City Times (Davenport, Iowa)

January 29, 2013 Tuesday

All Edition

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A7

Length: 376 words

Byline: James Q. Lynch, DES MOINES BUREAU

Dateline: Des Moines IA

Body

DES MOINES - Raising motor fuel taxes is not the only means of funding Iowa's critical transportation needs, but alternatives such as bonding, tolls and sales taxes come with their own shortcomings, the state's transportation chief told lawmakers Monday.

Department of Transportation Director Paul Trombino III didn't rule out pursuing some combination of motor fuel taxes and alternative funding sources.

"There is a sense that the motor fuel tax won't work forever, but it will work for a period of time," he told the Senate Transportation Committee.

However, he cautioned against borrowing or bonding to fund transportation projects.

"Borrowing doesn't fit the state of Iowa. It never has," Trombino said. Iowa has been a "pay-as-you-go" state.

States that rely on borrowing to meet transportation system costs "are facing some significant consequences because of that."

"Any time you intermingle the word finance with transportation projects, I think you are taking a cost, a long-term cost," he said. "That can be very counter-productive."

Tolls are sometimes advocated as a way to capture revenue from through traffic. However, Trombino warned that Iowa's grid system of roads, which allow fluid north-south, east-west movement, would make it easy for drivers to avoid the tollways.

"You would have to create such a high price for the toll that it wouldn't necessarily make revenue," he said.

There is talk at the state and federal levels about raising sales taxes to pay for transportation. Trombino estimated it would take a 1.1 percent increase in the state 6 percent sales tax to raise the \$440 million generated by the state motor fuel tax.

If lawmakers went that route, it would trigger an additional increase of three-eighths of a cent. That increase, dedicated to conservation spending, was approved by voters to take effect the next time the Iowa Legislature votes to raise the sales tax.

Another option is to charge drivers on a miles-traveled basis. In addition to the administrative challenge of that approach, it doesn't capture revenue from out-of-state motorists, Trombino said.

In the end, he said, rather than rely on any one funding source, "the more diversified the funding we have in transportation long-term is a significant benefit."

Load-Date: January 30, 2013

End of Document

Gas taxes aren't the only way to fix Iowa's roads

Muscatine Journal (Iowa)

January 28, 2013 Monday

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Distributed by Newsbank, Inc. All Rights Reserved

Section: IOWA

Length: 439 words

Byline: James Q. Lynch

Body

DES MOINES – Raising motor fuel taxes is not the only means of funding Iowa's critical transportation needs, but the alternatives – bonding, tolling and sales taxes, for example – come with their own shortcomings, the state's transportation chief told lawmakers Jan. 28.

Department of Transportation Director Paul Trombino III didn't rule out pursuing some combination of motor fuel taxes and alternative funding sources.

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However, he cautioned against borrowing or bonding to fund transportation projects.

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In the end, he said, rather than rely on any one funding source, "the more diversified the funding we have in transportation long-term is a significant benefit."

"Long-term it's not one thing that replaces (fuel taxes and excise fees), but a multitude of things," he said.

It was his second appearance before the committee since the Legislature convened Jan. 14. He's scheduled to make an encore appearance before the House Transportation Committee next week.

Comments: (319) 398-8375; james.lynch@sourcemedia.net

Load-Date: January 29, 2013

End of Document

Transportation chief seeks diversified funding sources

Globe Gazette (Mason City, Iowa)

January 28, 2013 Monday

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Section: IOWA

Length: 439 words

Byline: James Q. Lynch, MASON CITY GLOBE GAZETTE

Body

DES MOINES — Raising motor fuel taxes is not the only means of funding Iowa's critical transportation needs, but the alternatives — bonding, tolling and sales taxes, for example — come with their own shortcomings, the state's transportation chief told lawmakers on Monday.

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It was his second appearance before the committee since the Legislature convened Jan. 14. He's scheduled to make an encore appearance before the House Transportation Committee next week.

James Q. Lynch reports for the Gazette of Cedar Rapids.

Load-Date: January 29, 2013

End of Document

Latino commission opposes DOT immigrant policy

The Associated Press State & Local Wire

January 12, 2013 Saturday 1:25 AM GMT

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Section: STATE AND REGIONAL

Length: 366 words

Byline: By DAVID PITT, Associated Press

Dateline: DES MOINES Iowa

Body

Latino affairs commissioners appointed by Gov. Terry Branstad asked him Friday to reconsider his administration's new policy barring driver's licenses for certain young immigrants allowed by a federal rule to live in the United States.

The Office of Latino Affairs, a division under the state's Department of Human Rights, asked Branstad in a letter sent to him Friday to meet with them.

The letter said the Iowa Department of Transportation is wrong to deny licenses to immigrants brought into the United States as children by parents who were not legal residents and who qualify for the new deferred action program announced by President Barack Obama in June.

The DOT announced in December that it interpreted the new federal regulation to mean the immigrants are only protected from deportation for two years but not given legal status to be in the United States.

Iowa Department of Transportation Director Paul Trombino said in a legislative committee hearing this week that his department can't by law give a license to someone unauthorized to be in the United States.

The policy change has drawn criticism from Republicans and Democrats and civil rights groups.

The ACLU claims the state is misinterpreting the federal government's language, arguing immigrants in the program are given legal status to live in the U.S.

The commission's letter said the decision prevents about 5,000 Latinos in the state from safely driving to and from work and another 5,000 from driving to school and back.

"We were disappointed in the fact that we were excluded from the conversation that will significantly affect several thousand Latinos in the state of Iowa," the letter said.

The commission consists of seven appointees who make recommendations to the governor on issues that impact the Latino population.

Commissioner Joan Jaimes, a Marshalltown community college counselor, said she suggested the letter because she sees firsthand how it affects the college students she works with.

"I do see this as a major barrier for some of my students," she said. "It was just not nice. It's mean spirited."

Branstad spokesman Tim Albrecht acknowledged receipt of the letter.

"We'll carefully consider their request," he said.

Load-Date: January 12, 2013

End of Document

State Peace Officers Graduate from 2012 Academy

Targeted News Service

November 26, 2012 Monday 4:08 AM EST

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Length: 127 words

Byline: Targeted News Service

Dateline: JOHNSTON, Iowa

Body

The Iowa Department of Public Safety issued the following news release:

Today, Monday, Nov. 26, 2012, 16 men and women will become sworn peace officers for the State of Iowa at the 36th Academy Graduation. They will serve their communities as Troopers with the Iowa State Patrol and Motor Vehicle Enforcement Officers with the Iowa Department of Transportation.

WHAT: 36th Academy Commencement Exercises

WHO: 16 academy graduates

Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad

Iowa Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds

Commissioner K. Brian London, Department of Public Safety

Director Paul Trombino III, Iowa Department of Transportation

WHERE: Freedom Center - Iowa Army National Guard

Camp Dodge, Johnston

WHEN: Monday, Nov. 26, 2012

1:30 p.m.

Copyright Targeted News Services

TNS mv45 121127-4118942 61MarlynVitin

Load-Date: November 27, 2012

End of Document

South Korea: S. Korea signs driver's license deal with Iowa

Thai News Service

November 1, 2012 Thursday

Copyright 2012 Thai News Service All Rights Reserved

Section: GENERAL NEWS

Length: 185 words

Body

Iowa became the 12th U.S. state Tuesday to sign a driver's license reciprocity agreement with South Korea.

The agreement, effective immediately, allows South Korean citizens over 18 to exchange their valid noncommercial South Korean driver's license for an Iowa noncommercial driver's license without a knowledge or road test.

Iowa drivers will be able to exchange their Iowa driver's license for a South Korean driver's license.

The deal was signed by Huh Chul, South Korean consul general in Chicago, and Iowa Department of Transportation Director Paul Trombino III.

"This agreement serves the flow of commerce and economic prosperity between the Republic of South Korea and state of Iowa, while building continued collaboration, Trombino III said in a statement. We value the contributions made by South Korean businesses here in Iowa and are very pleased to partner with them to assist our Iowa business leaders now living and working in that country. South Korea has similar agreements with Maryland, Virginia, Washington, Massachusetts, Texas, Florida, Oregon, Michigan, Idaho, Alabama, and West Virginia. - PNA

Load-Date: February 6, 2013

End of Document

IOWA REACHES DRIVER'S LICENSE RECIPROCITY AGREEMENT WITH REPUBLIC OF SOUTH KOREA

States News Service

October 29, 2012 Monday

Copyright 2012 States News Service

Length: 413 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: AMES, IA

Body

The following information was released by the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT):

Iowa Department of Transportation Director **Paul Trombino** III and the Honorable Chul Huh, consul general of The Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Chicago, will be signing a special driver's license reciprocity agreement between the State of Iowa and Republic of South Korea on Tuesday in Iowa City. The agreement is expected to assist students, travelers and business people in both the Republic of South Korea and Iowa.

Other members of the Republic of South Korea delegation planning to attend the formal ceremonial signing event include Deputy Consul General Joonho Cheon and Deputy Consul Jong Wook Han.

A representative of the Korean-American Society of Iowa, as well as Korean pastors, students and others living in Iowa also plan to attend. Others representing the Iowa DOT will be Motor Vehicle Division Director Mark Lowe and David Stutz, executive officer within the Office of Driver Services.

"This agreement serves the flow of commerce and economic prosperity between the Republic of South Korea and State of Iowa, while building continued collaboration," said Iowa DOT Director **Paul Trombino** III. "We value the contributions made by South Korean businesses here in Iowa and are very pleased to partner with them to assist our Iowa business leaders now living and working in that country."

Under the agreement, which goes into effect immediately, South Korean citizens over the age of 18, who are lawfully present in the United States and have established residency in Iowa, will be able to exchange their valid noncommercial South Korean driver's license for an Iowa noncommercial driver's license.

The applicant will have to pay the requisite fees and pass a vision test, but will not be required to submit to a knowledge or drive test. Similarly, Iowa drivers, age 18 or older, who are residing in the Republic of South Korea and who possess a valid Iowa driver's license, will be able to exchange their Iowa driver's license for a South Korean driver's license without being required to pass a knowledge or road test.

The Iowa DOT carefully examined driving skills and qualifications required in South Korea and established they were comparable to those required in Iowa.

South Korea is the United States' seventh largest trading partner and has a strong economic presence in Iowa. The State of Iowa also has driver's license reciprocity agreements with France and Germany.

Iowa to seek sponsors for highway rest areas

The Associated Press State & Local Wire

June 13, 2012 Wednesday 6:17 PM GMT

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Section: STATE AND REGIONAL

Length: 494 words

Dateline: DES MOINES Iowa

Body

Iowa hopes to line up major advertising sponsors for its 40 interstate rest stops, an idea similar to selling corporate naming rights for baseball and football stadiums.

The Iowa Department of Transportation has approved a plan to seek competitive bids on sponsorship rights for the rest stops, The Des Moines Register (<http://dmreg.co/KTclfE>) reported Tuesday.

The agency spends about \$3.7 million annually to operate the rest areas, which host 16 million visitors a year.

"This will help defray some of our expenses. Every little bit helps," said department Director Paul Trombino III.

The Iowa Transportation Commission, the DOT's policy-making arm, approved regulations Tuesday to permit the corporate sponsorships.

In March, the Federal Highway Administration issued specific guidelines regarding the use of signs to identify sponsors in exchange for financial contributions or highway-related services.

Trombino said he doesn't know how much money the sponsorships might generate. He anticipates seeking bids later this year. Potential sponsors could include tourist attractions, truck stops and casinos. The Iowa rules prohibit partisan endorsements, so the presidential campaigns of Mitt Romney or Barack Obama, for example, couldn't sponsor a rest area.

DOT officials also acknowledge there is a potential for problems if divisive sponsors win the bidding.

Other states have enacted similar programs, and have had to deal with sponsoring issues. In Virginia, for example, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals last year offered to sponsor a rest area at Troutville, suggesting the facility's name be changed to the "Fishing Hurts" Rest Area.

Virginia DOT spokeswoman Tamara Rollison said Tuesday that the agency hasn't awarded any advertising rights yet and it is seeking "reputable companies in good standing" that can help provide additional funding to ease a budget crunch on the state's road system.

John Adam, director of the Iowa DOT's highway division, said state officials haven't specifically decided how to handle that type of situation.

"But the way the rules are written, we do have some latitude to decline a sponsorship that we think would be detrimental to the public good," he said.

Several motorists who pulled into a rest stop on Interstate 80 near Des Moines told The Register they had no objections to corporate sponsorships.

"I think it would be a good idea," said Bruce Goddard, a truck driver from Muscatine. He said rest areas provide truckers with good, safe places to pull off the road, and he favors anything that would help maintain or improve them.

Denny Crase, a contractor from Winterset, said he wouldn't want a group like PETA sponsoring a rest area, but would have no complaints about a company like the Hy-Vee grocery chain doing so.

"If it would help the state of Iowa keep them open, so what? I mean, everything else is sponsored by something," he said.

Information from: The Des Moines Register, <http://www.desmoinesregister.com>

Load-Date: June 14, 2012

End of Document

This rest area brought to you by the makers of ... Charmin?

Des Moines Register

June 13, 2012 Wednesday

1 Edition

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Section: MAIN NEWS; Pg. A1

Length: 805 words

Byline: By, WILLIAM PETROSKI

Body

The Iowa DOT will be seeking bids on sponsorships for the rest areas along interstates.

Motorists pulling into Iowa's 40 interstate highway rest areas may soon be greeted by signs welcoming them on behalf of a major corporate advertiser.

Just as baseball and football stadiums are selling corporate naming rights, the Iowa Department of Transportation has decided to seek competitive bids on sponsorship rights for its rest areas, which host 16 million visitors annually.

"This will help defray some of our expenses. Every little bit helps," said Iowa DOT Director Paul Trombino III. He noted the state transportation agency now spends about \$3.7 million annually to operate Iowa's interstate rest area system.

The Iowa Transportation Commission, the DOT's policy-making arm, approved regulations Tuesday to permit the corporate sponsorships. This follows the issuance of specific guidelines in March by the Federal Highway Administration regarding the use of signs to identify sponsors in exchange for financial contributions or highway-related services.

Trombino said he doesn't yet know how much money the sponsorships will attract, although the idea fits into Gov. Terry Branstad's challenge to have the agency operate in a more creative and cost-efficient manner.

But Ohio transportation officials have said they hope a similar program announced last month will generate millions of dollars in new revenue.

Trombino said he anticipates seeking bids from prospective sponsors later this summer or early fall. He indicated some have already expressed interest as he traveled around the state speaking to groups about transportation issues.

Potential sponsors could include tourist attractions, truck stops, casinos, convenience stores, auto insurance firms, and other businesses that would benefit, he said.

Iowa DOT officials also acknowledge there is a potential for problems if controversial sponsors win the bidding.

In Virginia, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals last year offered to sponsor a state highway rest area at Troutville, suggesting the facility's name be changed to the "Fishing Hurts" Rest Area. Virginia DOT spokeswoman

Tamara Rollison said Tuesday the agency hasn't awarded any advertising rights yet and it is seeking "reputable companies in good standing" that can help provide additional funding to ease a budget crunch on the state's road system.

In Georgia, a Ku Klux Klan group applied last month to join the state's Adopt-a-Highway program, which would allow its name to be posted along the road where it picks up litter. A federal appeals court in the past turned down Missouri's request to reject a similar effort, ruling the state couldn't stop the KKK from participating, and the U.S. Supreme Court let the decision stand.

John Adam, director of the Iowa DOT's highway division, said state officials do have concerns that some prospective Iowa sponsors could also prove controversial.

"We haven't specifically decided how we will deal with that. But the way the rules are written we do have some latitude to decline a sponsorship that we think would be detrimental to the public good. It is not tightly defined, but there is some room to evaluate the organization," Adam said.

The Iowa rules specifically prohibit partisan endorsements, so the presidential campaigns of Mitt Romney or Barack Obama, for example, couldn't sponsor a highway rest area.

The state rules approved Tuesday will allow corporate sponsors to place one "acknowledgment sign" on the main interstate highway right-of-way in advance of the rest area. The department may also allow signs within the rest area building.

DOT Commission Chairwoman Loree Miles of Dallas Center said she supported the rules, but she wants to be careful about how such sponsorships are awarded.

"This needs some scrutiny, obviously, and I am not exactly sure who would want to sponsor a rest area and why," Miles said.

But several motorists who pulled into the Interstate Highway 80 rest areas in Dallas County on Tuesday said they had no objections to corporate sponsorships of rest areas.

"I think it would be a good idea," said Bruce Goddard, a truck driver from Muscatine who was hauling a load of livestock feed to Omaha. He said Iowa's interstate rest areas provide truckers with good, safe places to pull off the road, particularly in the winter, and he favors anything that would help maintain or improve them.

Denny Crase, a contractor from Winterset who often stops at the Dallas County rest area en route to jobs, said he wouldn't want a group like PETA sponsoring a rest area, but he would have no complaints about a company like the Hy-Vee Inc. grocery chain doing so.

"As long as we've got the restrooms, I guess it's fine," Crase said. "If it would help the state of Iowa keep them open, so what? I mean, everything else is sponsored by something."

Load-Date: June 14, 2012

End of Document

Governor Branstad and Several State Department Heads Scheduled to Attend Keep Iowa Beautiful Event This Afternoon

Targeted News Service

March 27, 2012 Tuesday 12:04 AM EST

Copyright 2012 Targeted News Service LLC All Rights Reserved

Length: 325 words

Byline: Targeted News Service

Dateline: AMES, Iowa

Body

The Iowa Department of Transportation issued the following news release:

Iowa Governor Branstad, Iowa Department of Natural Resources Director Roger Lande, Iowa Department of Corrections Director John Baldwin, and Iowa Department of Transportation Director Paul Trombino III will be attending a proclamation signing sponsored by Keep Iowa Beautiful this afternoon. The event serves as a kickoff for Keep Iowa Beautiful Month, which starts in April.

Established in 2000, Keep Iowa Beautiful has become a successful, nationally recognized program that involves several initiatives carried out in partnership with these state agencies.

In recognition of Keep Iowa Beautiful Month, the State of Iowa is encouraging local governments and communities, civic and professional groups, businesses, churches, schools, families and individual citizens to participate in roadside, parks and waterway cleanups.

The Iowa DOT is also seeking volunteers to participate in the state's Adopt-A-Highway program, which provides a year-round opportunity to keep our roadsides clean. The great natural beauty of our state and clean environment are sources of great pride for all Iowans, attracting tourists and aiding in recruitment of new industries.

Keep Iowa Beautiful Month and the month-long cleanup activities planned for April, will increase awareness of the need for cleaner public spaces, and emphasize the importance of not littering, and encourage recycling of waste.

In addition, Keep Iowa Beautiful month is part of the state's and Keep Iowa Beautiful's effort to educate Iowa's young people about the importance of a clean environment to Iowa's quality of life.

Please join these State of Iowa officials and Keep Iowa Beautiful members today from 2:30 - 3 p.m. at the Governor's formal office at the Iowa Capitol in Des Moines for the proclamation signing. And, take an active role in making Iowa a cleaner place.

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TNS mv45 120328-3821034

Gas tax hike clears first hurdle

Globe Gazette (Mason City, Iowa)

February 8, 2012 Wednesday

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Section: NEWS

Length: 841 words

Byline: Rod Boshart, NORTH IOWA MEDIA GROUP

Body

DES MOINES – A three-member Senate Transportation subcommittee began a potentially bumpy political journey Wednesday in trying to guide a state gas tax increase to the governor's desk.

No one spoke in opposition before the panel unanimously approved a measure that seeks to raise the state's excise tax on motor vehicle fuels by five cents a gallon on Jan. 1, 2013, and another five cents a gallon on Jan. 1, 2014, and deposit the proceeds in a TIME-21 fund that would distribute the proceeds with 60 percent going to state transportation needs, and 20 percent each to cities and counties for bridge, highway and other transportation repairs or upgrades. Senate Study Bill 3141 also would extend tax breaks for biodiesel and ethanol and study changing transportation trends to equitably pay future highway costs.

"This is a user fee increase," said Sen. Tom Rielly, D-Oskaloosa, chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee. "Any time you talk about any fee increase, it's a last resort and I am convinced that we are at that last resort."

Backers noted that Iowa faces nearly \$2 billion in transportation needs, with a projected shortfall of \$220 million required each year to address the most critical deficiencies.

Sen. Tim Kapucian, R-Keystone, said it is becoming increasingly difficult to truck grain and other commodities to processing sites or shipping destinations due to deficient bridges or substandard roadways.

"The rural part of the state is dilapidated," he said. "As much as I do not like a tax increase, I feel it's imperative that we have to take a look at this at this time."

Iowa currently gets about \$1.2 billion in yearly transportation money through the state's road-use tax fund, which annually takes in \$470 million from various vehicle-related fees and \$430 million from fuel taxes currently set at 21 cents a gallon on sales of unleaded gasoline, 19 cents per gallon for ethanol-blended fuels and 22.5 cents a gallon for diesel, according to DOT data. Iowa's gas tax was last raised in 1989 and currently ranks in the bottom third among states nationally.

"We've got a multibillion-dollar problem and kicking the can down the road is no longer an option," said Sen. Matt McCoy, D-Des Moines, who supported a fuel tax hike because it equitably assesses users who live inside Iowa and travelers passing through on state highways. "Right now it's Iowans that are paying the brunt of it. These out-of-state users of our road system ought to be leaving their dimes and nickels behind in Iowa."

Rielly said he would prefer not to raise the state gas tax, but he noted he has put considerable study into the issue and has not found a better option. If someone comes forward with a viable alternative, he said he would be open to consider it but he believes the Legislature needs to push ahead because road construction costs continue to increase and delays are costing Iowans more money via deferred maintenance and repairs to their vehicles caused by potholes and other highway-related issues.

"The expenses are far out exceeding the revenues that are coming in," he said. "I've studied it for six years, this is the only thing that I know that can generate \$220 million a year and cost the average Iowa driver about \$65 a year (when fully implemented in 2014), and 20 percent of it is paid for by people outside the state of Iowa."

Each penny of state gas tax generates about \$22 million, he said.

Last fall members of the Governor's Transportation 2020 Citizen Advisory Commission recommended new funding mechanisms for high-efficiency and hybrid vehicles and study whether all vehicles using public roadways pay their fair share. The panel also recommended an increase of between 8 and 10 cents per gallon to the state's motor fuel tax.

Gov. Terry Branstad, who signed the last gas tax increase into law in 1989, instructed DOT Director Paul Trombino III to eliminate duplications, find efficiencies and identify administrative savings that would be the equivalent of 2 cents of fuel tax, or about \$50 million. Trombino recently issued a report that identified \$33 million in ongoing yearly savings and \$17 million in one-time savings that could be phased in over several years.

The governor has said he expects Iowa will have enough extra transportation money to meet critical needs in the coming construction season without having to consider a boost in the state gas tax, but he conceded that "down the road" he expects a phased increase in the "highway user fee" likely will have to be considered to address the state's projected \$220 million yearly shortfall.

Rielly said Wednesday that he believed the governor would sign a phased gas tax increase that took effect in 2013 if the split-control Legislature succeeds in getting it to his desk this session.

Ryan Rhodes, an Iowa Tea Party leader, contacted state legislators urging them to pledge to oppose a gas tax increase proposal, while Muscatine-based Iowans for Tax Relief is encouraging its members to urge their local legislators to oppose a gas tax increase.

Load-Date: March 13, 2013

End of Document

Transportation Committee meets

Denison Bulletin & Review (Iowa)

January 27, 2012

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Section: DENISON

Length: 1010 words

Byline: Senator James Seymour

Body

The first Senate Transportation Committee meeting of the year took place Wednesday, January 18.

The new Department of Transportation director, Paul Trombino, III, P.E., addressed the group. Director Trombino is relatively new to Iowa, having been appointed by Governor Terry Branstad in May 2011. He had most recently served as Bureau Director of Transit, Local Roads, Rails, and Harbors for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation where he administered planning, program funding and projects throughout the state.

Trombino addressed Iowa roads and their condition since he came on board. Iowa weathered a tough summer with flooding on the western side of the state and after the waters receded, the DOT expeditiously took care of repairs. However, Trombino said the state has a ways to go in terms of flooding preparedness, recovery and post disaster functionality.

Iowa has more than 114,000 miles of roads; close to 85 percent of our road use in Iowa is comprised of truck traffic. Trombino recognizes the importance of having a strong transportation system to match our strong economy and economic model. He aims to continue investing in our infrastructure so long-term needs can be met. Funding has become a primary concern for these roadways recently. A reduction of federal funds will be coming down the pike. Trombino knows that investing in the integrity of our roads now will save the state larger financial headaches in the future.

The fuel tax was also brought up and Director Trombino spoke again about preventative maintenance, including partnerships of cities and counties. It is the DOT's goal carry to out preventative maintenance in order to prevent roads from crumbling over the long-term. Taking a look at the long-term picture, Trombino thinks the state will need additional funding two to three years down the road to carry out the Department's plan.

With 9,400 miles of state roads alone, Trombino believes that starting the funding discussion now will help the Department and all of Iowa in the long-term. The Department recognizes there needs to be a balance when it comes to necessary projects and will work to find long-term solutions to Iowa's road, bridge and highway projects in a fiscally responsible manner.

Prison mental health crisis

As the Legislature grapples with a redesign of the state mental health system this session, it is important to note the role that our state prisons play, and the impact this is having on the budget. The Iowa Department of Corrections is

the state's largest mental health provider. While many people find this shocking, Iowa is not out of step with the rest of the nation. The three largest inpatient psychiatric facilities in the country are the Los Angeles County Jail, Rikers Island in New York, and the Cook County Jail in Illinois. Forty percent of the U.S. prison population has some form of mental illness, with 30 percent having a serious illness.

Most of these facilities are ill-equipped to deal with the mentally ill. Jails and prisons were never designed to treat sick, ageing, or mentally ill inmates.

However, they are now treating ever growing numbers of all three categories. Mental illness is particularly troublesome to deal with because of the combination of the high cost of care, heavy staff dependency, the inability to house the mentally ill with other prisoners, and the fact that staff is not trained to deal with them.

This crisis is the outgrowth of decisions made in the 1960s. Policymakers throughout the country chose to close mental health institutions and replace them with a community-based treatment system. In 1955 there was one psychiatric bed for every 300 Americans. Now according to the Treatment Advocacy Center (a respected Virginia-based non-profit dedicated to treatment of severe mental illness) there is only one for every 3,000 Americans.

Those suffering from mental illness frequently make difficult patients. Their illnesses can cause them to refuse treatment, or fail to take medicines. Their behaviors can be frightening and misunderstood by others. As a result they tend to come into contact with law enforcement with greater frequency than the general population.

Once inside the corrections system, the mentally ill often find it hard to get out. They often violate prison rules as a result of fear and suspicion of cellmates, guards, and even visiting family members. The mentally ill are targeted by fellow inmates who become upset by their behavior. In addition, they often fail in their required treatment programs and thus are not eligible for release. A final hurdle is that a lack of available psychiatric hospital beds often prevents their release when they become eligible.

In Iowa, the mentally ill prisoner population has seen a decline in persons diagnosed with anti-social behavior but an increase in those with substance abuse. This is significant because a growing number of mentally ill people, lacking access to proper care and medication, begin to self-medicate. This leads to abuse of illegal and legal drugs. The dual diagnosis of mentally ill substance abusers is a growing population nationwide.

Exacerbating Iowa's problems is the closure of state mental hospitals. With patients forced to rely on community services, which are also declining, it is usually only a matter of time before these former patients come in contact with the criminal justice system. Law enforcement is now encountering so many from this population subset that a strain on services is occurring as officers are pulled off the street to escort people to distant facilities for treatment.

As we redesign our state mental health system it is wise to remember that we are already providing services, at taxpayer expense, in what is probably the least likely setting to help either the patient or society at large. The Department of Corrections has become the de facto mental health provider for much of the state.

If you have any questions or concerns involving the Iowa Legislature, please feel free to email me at james.seymour@legis.iowa.gov

Load-Date: October 26, 2012

Gov takes gas tax hike off table

The Hawk Eye (Burlington, Iowa)

November 10, 2011 Thursday

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Section: NEWS - IOWA & ILLINOIS; Pg. 2A

Length: 517 words

Byline: MIKE GLOVER; Associated Press

Body

DES MOINES -- Gov. Terry Branstad said he's taking proposals to increase the state's gasoline tax off the table, rejecting a recommendation made by a commission he appointed.

"These are trying economic times for many lowans," said a statement issued by Branstad's office. "Before we ask for an increase in the fuel tax, we must find ways to more effectively utilize current revenue in the road use tax fund."

Branstad said in a statement released Wednesday he will press state transportation officials to find administrative savings of nearly \$50 million over the next year. He said those savings must be found before any increase is proposed in the gasoline tax. Branstad's plans were first reported by the Gazette newspaper based off comments the governor made during a WHO-AM radio call-in show.

"We must spend dollars we receive more efficiently and streamline operations to maximize every dollar," Branstad said.

The governor acknowledges studies have shown more money is needed for the state's highways, but he said funding should come from increased efficiency in highway programs before the state increases taxes.

Legislative leaders said Branstad's position will make it difficult for lawmakers to consider increased gasoline taxes during the upcoming legislative session.

"I think we are certainly going to take a look at his language and his words and see what it means," said Senate Majority Leader Michael Gronstal, D-Council Bluffs. "It certainly makes it less likely."

An advisory commission the governor named has recommended an increase in the state's gasoline tax of eight cents to 10 cents a gallon. The gasoline tax currently is 21 cents per gallon for regular gas, and 19 cents for ethanol-blended fuel. That commission also recommended an increase in vehicle registration fees that would bring in an additional \$50 million a year.

Each penny of increased fuel taxes generates \$22 million.

The gasoline tax hasn't been increased since 1989.

The commission Branstad named pointed to dwindling federal funding, along with consumers switching to more fuel efficient vehicles as cutting into state dollars available to maintain the highway system.

Branstad conceded the shortfall.

"The state of Iowa does have a significant road funding need and the Transportation 2020 report shows that," the governor said. "However, before any gas tax increase is looked at, we must first examine all opportunities to reduce administrative cost and duplication at all levels of state government to make sure we are good stewards of the tax dollars we currently receive."

Gronstal said he planned to meet with Branstad aides to clarify his position, but said his public statements seem to leave little room for maneuvering. With Republicans holding the governor's office and the House, while Democrats control the Senate, any tax increase would have to have bipartisan support, Gronstal noted.

In his statement, Branstad said he's directed Department of Transportation head Paul Trombino to find the equivalent of two cents of gas tax, or nearly \$50 million, in administrative savings over the next year.

Load-Date: November 29, 2013

End of Document

Iowa governor wants efficiency before gas tax hike

The Associated Press State & Local Wire

November 10, 2011 Thursday 12:11 AM GMT

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Section: STATE AND REGIONAL

Length: 516 words

Byline: By MIKE GLOVER, Associated Press

Dateline: DES MOINES Iowa

Body

Gov. Terry Branstad said he's taking proposals to increase in the state's gasoline tax off the table, rejecting a recommendation made by a commission he appointed.

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Load-Date: November 10, 2011

End of Document

Iowa: Interstate 680 to reopen on Nov. 2; grand reopening ceremony planned #MoRiver.

US Official News

October 31, 2011

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Length: 220 words

Body

Des Moines: Department of Transportation, State of Iowa has issued the following press release:

The Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) is announcing that Interstate 680 in Pottawattamie County will be reopened at approximately 2 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 2. The Iowa DOT's fast-track flood recovery effort and accelerated pace of construction by the contractors has led to the quick reopening.

Working 24 hours a day at times since construction started Sept. 28, Peterson Contractors Inc. of Reinbeck and Reilly Construction Company Inc. of Ossian and their subcontractors, consultants and suppliers have completed work in only 34 working days.

All four lanes of I-680 will be reopened to traffic. The ramps at the 130th Street interchange (exit 1) will remain closed due to the closure of the intersecting local roadways.

Iowa Governor Terry Branstad, Iowa Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds and Iowa DOT Director Paul Trombino III will be hosting a grand reopening ceremony at 1 p.m. at the I-680/130th Street interchange. Joining them will be U.S. DOT Federal Highway Administration Administrator Victor Mendez, Council Bluffs Mayor Tom Hanafan and Omaha Mayor Jim Suttle. The Nebraska Department of Roads has also been invited. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

For more information please visit: <http://www.iowadot.gov/>

Load-Date: November 2, 2011

End of Document

Local Knights of Columbus group earns Governor's Award

Britt News Tribune (Forest City, Iowa)

August 24, 2011

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Section: NEWS

Length: 271 words

Byline: Emilie Nelson, NORTH IOWA MEDIA GROUP

Body

For more than two decades, the St. Patrick Knights of Columbus Council 8610 has been working to improve the environment and clean the appearance of the ditches east of Britt.

In July, the group was among the more than 700 individuals and organizations statewide to be recognized by the State of Iowa with a Governor's Volunteer Award. They were nominated by Paul Trombino on behalf of the Iowa Department of Transportation for their efforts.

The group has a two mile stretch U.S. Highway 18 east of Britt which they clean at least twice a year, K of C member Paul Kelly said.

"We usually clean in the spring before the beginning of summer and again in the fall," Kelly said.

Kelly has been a member of the Knights of Columbus for 27 years, and for as long as he has been a member, possibly even longer, they have been cleaning the ditches.

As the past financial director of the group and as one who helps lead the clean-up activities, Kelly received a letter notifying the group that they were recipients of the award.

"I've always worked with Paul to get the bags delivered for clean-up," Kelly said. "The clean-up is what was mentioned, but we were probably recognized for a number of things."

Kelly said that throughout the year the Knights of Columbus assists with parking cars at the Hancock County Fair, hosts breakfast fundraisers after Sunday Mass and sells Tootsie Rolls with the funds raised going to charitable causes.

Kelly, along with current financial director Craig Leerar, accepted the award from Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds at an awards presentation ceremony July 6 on the campus of Buena Vista University in Storm Lake.

Load-Date: November 30, 2013

Governor cites 'energy, experience' of DOT pick

Des Moines Register

May 2, 2011 Monday

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Section: NEWS; Pg. A5

Length: 463 words

Byline: By, WILLIAM PETROSKI

Body

bpetroski@dmreg.com

Paul Trombino, a Wisconsin engineer appointed by Gov. Terry Branstad last week as director of the Iowa Department of Transportation, has no shortage of energy for his new job.

Trombino, 44, is a triathlete who has participated in six Ironman competitions consisting of a 2.4-mile swim, 112 miles on a bicycle and a 26.2-mile marathon run. He said one of his priorities will be to travel through Iowa, meeting DOT employees, speaking with groups, and talking face-to-face with people to hear their concerns and visions for the state's transportation system.

"I would have to say my biggest goal right now is to earn the trust and the confidence not only of the department's staff, but of the people of the state of Iowa," Trombino said. "That is going to be my focus: a very open, transparent communication style."

In terms of transportation policy matters, Trombino said "freight is going to be a huge issue for all the states." He wants to make sure Iowa's freight system works well with other Midwest states for shipments via highway, railroad, aviation, rivers and other modes.

He said he wants to defer to the Iowa Legislature on the issue of state money for expanding Iowa's passenger railroad system.

Regarding airports, he said he recognizes the Des Moines airport plays a key role in Iowa, but it's important to remember rural airports serve many businesses.

He said he's already heard plenty about Iowa's four-lane roads, and he wants to make sure there is funding to maintain a modern road network.

And as an avid bicyclist, he said he considers bicycle safety to be a priority. Ames is an example of a community with a good, safe bicycle system, he said.

Trombino holds bachelor's degrees in civil engineering and economics. He had been the director of the Bureau of Transit, Local Roads, Rails and Harbors for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation where he administered planning, program funding and projects statewide.

Branstad chose Trombino, who will be paid \$140,000 annually, from a field of 81 applicants.

"Paul's energy, passion for the job and diverse experience within all facets of transportation will serve him well," Branstad said.

The Iowa DOT, which has more than 3,000 employees, is one of the largest state agencies. It oversees about 9,000 miles of roads and 4,000 bridges, the issuance of driver's licenses and other motor vehicle-related matters, as well as Iowa's aviation, rail and public transit systems.

Trombino succeeds DOT director Nancy Richardson, who is retiring. His appointment is subject to Iowa Senate confirmation. He is to start next Monday.

Trombino and his wife, Trish, have two children. He said they haven't decided yet whether they will buy a house in the Des Moines area or in Ames, where DOT headquarters is located.

Load-Date: May 2, 2011

End of Document

Trombino appointed to head Iowa DOT

The Tribune (Ames, Iowa)

April 28, 2011 Thursday

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Section: NEWS

Length: 199 words

Byline: Staff Writer

Body

Bob Zientara, Staff Writer The Iowa Department of Transportation will soon have a new director, pending confirmation by the Iowa Senate, Gov. Terry Branstad announced Wednesday.

Paul Trombino, 44, a director with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, will take the place of DOT Director Nancy Richardson, who is retiring this year. Trombino is scheduled to begin working in Ames on May 9, according to the governor's office.

"Paul's energy, passion for the job and diverse experience within all facets of transportation will serve him well as he leads the Iowa Department of Transportation," Branstad said in announcing the appointment.

Trombino is bureau director of transit, local roads, rails and harbors for the Wisconsin DOT, and he directs planning, program funding and projects throughout the state.

Trombino was a region operations director for the Wisconsin DOT until taking his current job earlier this year. He also has worked as Wisconsin DOT bureau director of structures, as a proposal manager and as a senior project manager for Earth Tech, an environmental consulting company based in Madison, Wis.

Bob Zientara can be reached at (515) 663-6961, or rzientara@amestrib.com .

Load-Date: August 9, 2014

End of Document

BRANSTAD NAMES PAUL TROMBINO AS DIRECTOR OF THE IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

States News Service

April 27, 2011 Wednesday

Copyright 2011 States News Service

Length: 380 words

Byline: States News Service

Dateline: DES MOINES, Iowa

Body

The following information was released by the office of the governor of Iowa:

Gov. Terry E. Branstad today announced that Paul Trombino III, P.E. will serve as the Director of the Iowa Department of Transportation.

"I am pleased to announce that Paul Trombino, an individual with expertise in both the private and public sector, will serve as Director of the Iowa Department of Transportation," said Branstad. "Paul's energy, passion for the job and diverse experience within all facets of transportation will serve him well as he leads the Iowa Department of Transportation."

Trombino is currently the Bureau Director of Transit, Local Roads, Rails, and Harbors for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation where he administers planning, program funding and projects throughout the state.

"I want to thank Governor Branstad and Lieutenant Governor Kim Reynolds for giving me the opportunity to serve the people of Iowa in this capacity," said Trombino. "I will work tirelessly to move the Iowa DOT forward with its more than 3,000 employees."

The Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) is charged with overseeing the use of over 9,000 miles of roads and 4,000 bridges, leading the motor vehicle division, managing Iowa's aviation, rail and public transit systems, and planning for Iowa's transportation future, which plays an important part of the Iowa economy.

Trombino previously served as the Region Operations Director of the Wisconsin DOT until 2011 when he took his current position as a Bureau Director. As Region Operations Director, Trombino managed over 1,100 state employees that worked on an over \$1 billion highway construction program. Trombino has also worked for the Wisconsin DOT as Bureau Director of Structures, Proposal Manager, and as a Senior Project Manager for Earth Tech in Southeast Wisconsin.

Trombino holds a Bachelor's of Science degrees in Civil Engineering with Tau Beta Pi Honors from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Economics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Paul and his wife, Trish, have two children, Enzo and Mila.

Following the November 2010 election, Gov. Branstad asked current Director, Nancy Richardson, to continue in her role through the 2011 legislative session. Director Richardson will be retiring on Thursday, April 28.

Load-Date: May 2, 2011

End of Document

Branstad names Wisconsin man as Iowa DOT director

The Associated Press State & Local Wire

April 27, 2011 Wednesday 4:53 PM GMT

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Section: STATE AND REGIONAL

Length: 99 words

Dateline: DES MOINES Iowa

Body

Gov. Terry Branstad has named a Wisconsin man as the new director of the Iowa Department of Transportation.

Branstad on Wednesday appointed 44-year-old Paul Trombino (trom-BE'-know) III, of Verona, Wis., to replace Nancy Richardson, who is retiring. Richardson has been director since 2005. Her last day is Thursday.

Trombino is a bureau director for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. His appointment is subject to Senate confirmation.

The Iowa transportation department oversees the state's transportation systems, including highways, bridges, aviation, rail and public transit systems.

Load-Date: April 28, 2011

End of Document

State will seek federal Hiawatha grants

Milwaukee Business Journal

March 29, 2011 Tuesday

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Length: 671 words

Body

The state will apply for \$150 million to buy two new trains to decrease trip times on the Hiawatha passenger rail route and build a \$60 million train maintenance facility in Milwaukee.

The new trains would decrease the train travel time between Milwaukee and Chicago from just more than 90 minutes to about an hour, Gov. Scott Walker said. The state would also add more daily round trips on the service, Walker said. Currently, trains make seven round-trips between Milwaukee and Chicago.

The anticipated increased ridership on the Hiawatha would decrease the amount of state aid needed to operate the route, he said.

"With the enhancements we're talking about and the upgrades, we're going to continue to see increased ridership along these lines and that's good for business," Walker said.

The new \$60 million train-maintenance facility would be built in the former Tower Automotive site, which the city of Milwaukee owns and intends to redevelop into job-creating industrial companies.

The federal grants require the state to contribute money to the train purchases and new train facility, but the exact amount the state would pay is undetermined.

The U.S. Department of Transportation set an April 4 deadline for states to apply for \$2.43 billion in federal high-speed rail grants. Most of the money is available because Florida in February rejected a \$2.93 billion federal grant award. Walker said Wisconsin's application would be part of a partnership with Illinois, Michigan, Missouri and Amtrak, which operates the Hiawatha service, to buy new train equipment.

Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett, who earlier this month urged the state to apply for the money, has been meeting with federal officials to discuss the possibility of upgrading the Hiawatha.

"This is an important step forward toward improving the rail connection between Milwaukee and Chicago," Barrett said in a statement Tuesday. "The Hiawatha is a popular route with a growing number of riders, and it provides a valuable economic link between Illinois and Wisconsin."

However Milwaukee Ald. Robert Bauman said the chances of the federal government sending more money to Wisconsin are slim to none. Walker, who returned \$810 million in stimulus grants to establish high-speed rail service between Milwaukee and Madison, said he is a supporter of improvements to the Hiawatha line.

The application for additional federal stimulus money, if successful, would cover some of the costs to build a train maintenance facility, which Wisconsin is required to do under the earlier agreement with the Federal Railroad Administration.

Walker said Wisconsin is required to pay the entire \$30 million budget for the new train maintenance facility. The facility would service two new passenger trains that Talgo Inc. is building for the Hiawatha service in Milwaukee. The two Talgo trains would replace aging train sets that currently run the Hiawatha route.

But if the application is successful, the state could buy two additional trains to increase the frequency of trips, and have the federal government pay 80 percent of the cost of a \$60 million maintenance facility. Under that scenario, the state would pay about \$12 million for the train shed, Walker said.

The federal grants require the state contribute money to the train purchases and new train facility, but the exact amount the state would pay is undetermined, said Paul Trombino, Wisconsin Department of Transportation bureau director of local roads, transit and rail. The amount of state money spent on the initiative could affect the Wisconsin's competitiveness with other states seeking the federal money, he said.

"One of the things they're looking for is a match," Trombino said.

If successful, the state would pursue future projects to improve the track on which Hiawatha runs, Trombino said. Track improvements are not part of the \$150 million application. However, projects on isolated portions of the track could improve speed by straightening out curves in the track that force trains to slow down, for example, he said.

Load-Date: April 13, 2011

End of Document

Expect delays: Hoan Bridge deck repair in Milwaukee gets rolling.

The Daily Reporter

October 4, 2010

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ASAP

Copyright 2010 Dolan Media Newswires

Length: 287 words

Body

Byline: Joe Lanane

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation plans to spend between \$13 million and \$13.99 million redecking the Hoan Bridge in Milwaukee.

State Highway Project-Hoan Bridge Deck Repair, B-40-400, Lake Freeway, Interstate Highway 794, Milwaukee

The project preparation work -- taping and lane closures -- started Monday. Lunda Construction Co., Black River Falls, is targeting Nov. 19 to finish the preparation work.

Crews closed the northbound entrance ramp at Carferry Drive on Monday, and northbound traffic in that area will be periodically restricted, said Paul Trombino, WisDOT division operations director.

An advertisement seeking bids for construction and deck patching from Carferry Drive to the Lake Interchange will be published Oct. 12, and bids will be due Nov. 9.

Bids were let in September for the preparation work on the Hoan Bridge, with Lunda winning the project with a \$214,052.48 bid, the lowest of four offers for the project.

The projects, as well as preliminary planning and engineering, bring the total cost of the Hoan work to \$17 million, Trombino said.

"It is going to be an inconvenience, yes, but we do think there are some other routes," he said. "If people still want to move north using the Hoan Bridge, they'll just have to get on the highway a little further south" at Oklahoma or Howard avenues.

The Hoan opened in 1977 and carries about 43,000 vehicles per day, many of which Trombino said would seek alternate routes as a result of construction.

"I think any project that typically starts, you see some delay at first when people are still not used to the construction activities," Trombino said. "Eventually, people find alternative routes and people begin to move more efficiently."

Load-Date: October 12, 2010

\$12M IS DEPOT'S STARTING POINT; A HEARING ON A DOWNTOWN TRAIN STATION OFFERS DETAILS ON COST, POSSIBLE DESIGN.

Wisconsin State Journal (Madison, Wisconsin)

September 1, 2010 Wednesday

ALL EDITION

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Section: FRONT; Pg. A1

Length: 505 words

Byline: By MATTHEW DeFOUR , mdefour@madison.com, 608-252-6144

Body

The state Department of Transportation estimates a Madison passenger rail station next to Monona Terrace will cost about \$12 million, though city officials already are contemplating additions that could drive up the local share of the cost.

The estimate, along with more detailed design sketches, were showcased Tuesday night at the state's Department of Administration building, 101 E. Wilson St., where the train station will be located. About 150 people attended.

State and city officials still have to negotiate a final cost-sharing arrangement for the station, DOT Divisions Operations Director Paul Trombino said. The state plans to own and operate the station, he said.

The state budgeted \$24 million for station development - including \$9 million for Madison and \$5 million each for Watertown, Oconomowoc and Brookfield - but has since nixed plans for an Oconomowoc station. Some of the money for Oconomowoc could go toward the Madison station, but the cost of other stations remains unknown, Trombino said.

Madison already has committed to building a 1,200-stall underground parking structure on the site of the dilapidated Government East parking ramp across Wilson Street from the DOA building. An already planned 800-stall structure was anticipated to cost \$23.5 million, and the train station will require 400 of its own stalls.

Though the DOT concept includes locating an intercity bus boarding area on Pinckney Street next to the parking ramp, the city anticipates locating a public market and bicycle parking facility on the ground floor.

Madison transit planner David Trowbridge said the city is considering ways to create an intercity bus boarding area either on an expanded top parking deck of Monona Terrace or on the opposite side of John Nolen Drive from the train platform. The cost of either option is unknown.

"I don't want a lot of drop-offs on Wilson Street because of the future land use," Trowbridge said. "A pedestrian environment is not quite as compatible with taxis zooming in and out."

The drawings gave a glimpse of the first-floor plan for the DOA building and how passengers would reach the train tracks from Wilson Street.

Visitors would enter through the existing front doors and see ticket counters, retail outlets and bathrooms where the Wisconsin Arts Board offices are now located. The existing cafeteria would be remodeled into a restaurant and seating area.

A short skywalk would connect to passengers to the top floor of a new, four-story, free-standing platform structure with elevators and escalators. Passengers also could access the structure on the third floor from the parking lot of Monona Terrace off Pinckney Street.

The platform concept envisions a narrow, glass-paneled structure with an undulating roof resembling a sideways wishbone. The wave design would complement the Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired Monona Terrace design, Trombino said.

The 26-foot-wide platform would sit between two tracks to allow freight trains to travel unimpeded while passenger trains to Milwaukee are boarded.

Graphic

Wisconsin Department of Transportation WHAT THE STATION COULD LOOK LIKE The proposal for Madison's train platform features a four-story, free-standing structure between two train tracks. Passengers would enter either from Wilson Street or the top deck of the Monona Terrace parking lot and take escalators or elevators down to a 26-foot-wide platform.

Load-Date: September 2, 2010

End of Document

Hoan Bridge project to begin next month

Milwaukee Business Journal
September 1, 2010 Wednesday

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Length: 198 words

Body

The state is planning to complete construction of the first portion of the Hoan Bridge redecking by mid-November.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is planning to rebuild the roadway surface, but not the structure of the Hoan Bridge, between the bridge's northern edge in downtown Milwaukee and the exit at the Port of Milwaukee.

WisDOT this week asked contractors for bids for the first leg of that project. The project is on the southern end of the bridge, and stretches from the Port of Milwaukee exits to approximately where the bridge passes over East Bay Street.

The agency is requiring contractors keep two lanes of westbound I-794 open throughout the project. The westbound ramp onto the bridge from Carferry Drive will remain closed during the project as the ramp's surface is rebuilt.

The project is to be complete by Nov. 19. Paul Trombino, WisDOT division operations director, said work is likely to begin in October.

The agency on Wednesday is also collecting proposals from companies to manage the project to rebuild the entire bridge roadway surface, Trombino said. The state is also doing a full inspection of the Hoan Bridge that will be complete by the end of the year.

Load-Date: September 1, 2010

End of Document

United States : Planners Sketch the Cost of Scrapping High-Speed Rail

TendersInfo

August 20, 2010 Friday

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Length: 441 words

Byline: sanjay.s03

Body

Division exists in southeast Wisconsin about the wisdom of constructing a high-speed rail line linking Milwaukee and Madison.

The Obama Administration has agreed to give Wisconsin \$810 million in stimulus money to build the system, and work as commenced.

This week, the state Department of Transportation told Oconomowoc that it would no longer be considered as a site for a train stop because the community does not seem to welcome the plan. And Republican candidates for governor, Scott Walker and Mark Neumann criticized the rail project as unnecessary and too expensive for taxpayers (DOT estimates \$7.5 million state funding needed annually for operational costs). Walker says, if elected, he'll give every cent back to the federal government.

So far, the Federal Railroad Administration has sent Wisconsin \$52 million dollars to begin designing a high speed rail line linking Milwaukee and Madison, according to Paul Trombino. He's division operations director for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Trombino says the state has signed two contracts using \$21 million of those dollars to begin work on the corridor between Madison and Watertown.

Contracts with CH2 who is doing our station environmental and preliminary engineering And then, in addition, we have executed a contract with HNTB who is doing the design, bringing the plans from preliminary design up to final design, biddable plans, Trombino says.

Trombino says the state owns a rickety line between Madison and Watertown, and contracts with Wisconsin Southern Railroad to operate it. There is a single set of tracks there, so old, they can carry freight traveling at only 10 miles an hour. Under the DOT's plans, two new sets of tracks would be built, able to accommodate high-speed trains. And a few bridges would be needed. Trombino says they'd cost more than \$50 million, and the state plans to sign contracts for that work late next month. Also within the next few weeks, the department intends to initiate design work on the segment between Milwaukee and Watertown.

Obviously, we're working with Canadian Pacific. They own the rail line between Milwaukee to Watertown. Portions of that segment is double-track, a portion of that segment is single track. That work will be upgrading that whole line to be able to handle obviously 110 mph trains and making it double-track all the way to Watertown, Trombino says. So by the time the next governor takes office in January, how much money will the state have committed to high-speed rail contracts?

We'll have contracts, I would anticipate to be in excess of \$100 million, Trombino estimates.
Ltd.

Load-Date: August 20, 2010

End of Document

Kraemer & Sons to begin netting work on Hoan Bridge in Milwaukee, expect lane closures.

The Daily Reporter

August 4, 2010

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Length: 250 words

Body

Byline: Joe Yovino

Edward Kraemer & Sons Inc. will begin installation of plastic netting under the Hoan Bridge in Milwaukee later this week. The project is expected to force lane closures over the 2.5-mile span through October.

The Plain-based company submitted the low bid recently for installation of netting over the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District's Jones Island treatment plant. As part of the contract, Kraemer & Sons also will repair netting over the Summerfest grounds.

Kraemer & Sons' \$1.8 million bid was nearly \$800,000 lower than that of the other bidder, Zenith Tech Inc., Waukesha. Work is expected to be completed by year end.

Small pieces of concrete began falling from the Hoan Bridge in June, according to a Wisconsin Department of Transportation official. The deterioration prompted a plan to hang netting over Jones Island.

The new net will stretch from the southern end of the Jones Island treatment plant to the Milwaukee harbor inlet north of the plant, Paul Trombino, WisDOT division operations director, said.

Bids will be let out in September for deck repairs to the Hoan with work scheduled to begin in October, according to WisDOT. While the potholes are fixed, Graef-USA, which was hired as part of a master contract with WisDOT, will conduct its engineering inspection.

The deck repairs are expected to be completed in 2011 at a cost of \$12 million to \$17 million, according to the plan outlined by WisDOT.

The Hoan opened in 1977 and carries about 43,000 vehicles per day.

Load-Date: August 12, 2010

End of Document

Contracts awarded for Milwaukee's Hoan Bridge repair work.

The Daily Reporter

July 20, 2010

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ASAP

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Length: 392 words

Body

Byline: Joe Yovino

Hoan Bridge Under Deck Netting, B-40-400, I-794, Pavement Marking and Under Deck Netting (No. 20)

Edward Kraemer & Sons Inc. has been awarded a contract to install netting under the Hoan Bridge in Milwaukee.

The Plain-based company submitted the low bid last week for installation of netting over the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District's Jones Island treatment plant. As part of the contract, Kraemer & Sons also will repair netting over the Summerfest grounds.

Kraemer & Sons' \$1.8 million bid was nearly \$800,000 lower than that of the other bidder, Zenith Tech Inc., Waukesha. Work is expected to begin in September and be completed by year end.

Small pieces of concrete began falling from the Hoan Bridge in June, according to a Wisconsin Department of Transportation official. The deterioration prompted a plan to hang netting over Jones Island.

The new net will stretch from the southern end of the Jones Island treatment plant to the Milwaukee harbor inlet north of the plant, Paul Trombino, WisDOT division operations director, said.

The state also has awarded a contract to Graef-USA Inc., Milwaukee, to conduct "an in-depth engineering inspection" of the bridge, according to a release attributed to WisDOT. The inspection work will begin this week at a cost of \$650,000 and will be completed by year end, according to the release.

"Our priority is to keep the Hoan Bridge structurally sound and safe for the traveling public," according to a statement attributed to WisDOT Secretary Frank Busalacchi. "The department has an active process for maintenance and inspection of bridges."

From 1996 to 2009, WisDOT conducted 11 formal inspections of the bridge, according to the release. The latest analysis - using thermo technology that detects temperature variances - was performed this year in order to prepare plans for a deck repair on the bridge, according to WisDOT.

Bids will be let out in September for deck repairs to the Hoan with work scheduled to begin in October, according to WisDOT. While the potholes are fixed, Graef-USA, which was hired as part of a master contract with WisDOT, will conduct its engineering inspection.

The deck repairs are expected to be completed in 2011 at a cost of \$12 million to \$17 million, according to the plan outlined by WisDOT.

The Hoan opened in 1977 and carries about 43,000 vehicles per day.

Load-Date: July 28, 2010

End of Document

NO QUARTER <|> Doyle donor gets heftier no-bid job from state

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (Wisconsin)

July 19, 2010 Monday

Final Edition

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Section: A News; Pg. 1

Length: 1467 words

Byline: DANIEL BICE, , Staff, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Body

Clearly, it helps to give to candidates on both sides of the aisle.

A couple of weeks ago, Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker, a Republican running for governor, awarded a \$300,000, no-bid contract to Graef-USA to inspect county buildings to make sure they're safe. But then Democratic Gov. Jim Doyle's administration topped that by handing the politically connected engineering firm an even bigger no-bid deal last week.

The announcement from the state Department of Transportation had this to say about the arrangement:

"The state has also negotiated an engineering contract to conduct an in-depth engineering inspection of the Hoan Bridge," the statement said. "That work will begin next week at a cost of about \$650,000 and will be completed by the end of the year."

Notice that the release is missing one key detail: the name of the firm.

Campaign records show Graef execs have given \$41,010 to the governor's campaign fund since 2002. In the same time, employees of the firm have donated a little less than \$15,000 to the county executive.

That's chump change to a major corporation.

But the return has been huge for Graef.

Paul Trombino, the division operations director for DOT, said his agency has a "master contract" with the Milwaukee-based firm. That means Graef will do certain engineering work for the department for a set sum over a specified period. The state selected Graef for this master contract after it asked various consultants to submit proposals competing for it.

Because of this master contract arrangement, the state didn't have to go through a bidding process to select an engineering firm for the work on the Hoan. Graef will be paid as part of the larger agreement.

Even so, Trombino assured Milwaukee residents that Graef is the best firm for the job.

"WisDOT considered qualifications, available resources, and expertise to inspect the Hoan Bridge and Graef was the most qualified firm," Trombino said in a statement. "WisDOT then scoped and negotiated a contract with Graef for the in-depth inspection of the bridge."

State officials have been under pressure from area legislators and others to fix the bridge connecting downtown Milwaukee with the Bay View neighborhood and suburbs south of the city. The Hoan opened in 1977 and now carries about 43,000 vehicles per day.

For months, Transportation Secretary Frank Busalacchi had been silent on the topic before issuing the news release on the new plan.

Under that plan, the state will spend up to \$17 million to patch the road atop the bridge beginning in October. Graef will then conduct an inspection aimed at helping officials decide what to do about the deteriorating bridge.

In the meantime, the state is installing plastic nets to catch the falling chunks of concrete from the underside of the structure.

Really.

The county turned to Graef to help with its own crumbling infrastructure. The firm will conduct emergency inspections of many county buildings to look for any safety hazards. The firm is to be paid up to \$300,000 through the end of August.

The move came after last month's accident at O'Donnell Park's garage. A 15-year-old Greenfield boy was killed and two others were injured when a 13-ton concrete panel fell from the parking ramp near the Summerfest grounds.

In all, Graef is being handed nearly \$1 million, without any real competition, to ensure the safety of some of Milwaukee's disintegrating public structures.

The firm directed questions about the contracts to Burt Naumann, a vice president who has given small donations to Doyle and Walker. Naumann didn't return calls.

Walker left it to his aides to discuss the no-bid deal - until this column drew attention to it. Then Walker hit the talk-radio circuit.

Doyle officials were even more tight-lipped.

Peg Schmitt, a spokesman for the department, ignored multiple calls or e-mails. Same for two staffers in Doyle's office.

After several tries, No Quarter did reach Busalacchi. But he was in no mood to offer anything concrete about the Hoan.

"I can't talk to you right now," the transportation boss snapped before hanging up. He didn't call back.

Back to the future

Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett, a Democratic candidate for governor, said the region's main jobs agency needed to go in a new direction when the city took it over in 2007.

But that new direction apparently means reaching deep into the past.

The agency, now called the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, has been paying former Opportunities Industrialization Center of Greater Milwaukee executive Bill Clay to serve as a consultant for the past year.

Under the contract, Clay is paid up to \$11,250 for every three months of work - the equivalent of \$45,000 a year. The contract, which is federally funded, limits his pay to no more than \$937.50 per day. That includes reimbursement for some expenses because Clay now lives in North Carolina.

Donald Sykes, president of the agency, said the former OIC executive is helping improve the coordination among and the organization of various community-based organizations. Clay is also providing assistance with the jobs agency's weatherization program.

Sykes said he could think of no one better to do these jobs. He noted that Clay is also a consultant for Goodwill Industries in Wisconsin.

"Clay is a super administrator," Sykes said.

For years, Clay was chief operating officer at the now-defunct OIC, once the state's largest contractor for the Wisconsin Works welfare reform program. In 2004, Clay cooperated with federal prosecutors in connection with a kickback scheme that directed almost \$270,000 in W-2 money to former state Sen. Gary George.

George, a Milwaukee Democrat, and Clay's former boss at OIC, Carl Gee, went to prison for their roles in the conspiracy. Clay lost his job there after testifying against Gee.

But that wasn't the agency's only problem while Clay was its No. 2 official. A state audit called into question nearly a half-million dollars in spending, including payments for former Ald. Mike McGee's radio show, and pointed out that Clay was paid \$1.35 million in salary, bonuses and benefits by OIC between 1997 and 2003.

Barrett's chief of staff, Pat Curley, said the mayor is comfortable with Clay's contract - even with the baggage. Curley said Clay is generally well respected, noting that he was forthright while testifying during Gee's trial.

In addition, Curley said, it's not the mayor's place to micromanage the jobs agency. "We're very comfortable with Don, the board and the direction they're taking."

Limited duty

Assembly candidate Laura Manriquez plays up her role as a community volunteer, especially for her work in providing treatment alternatives for those with addictions.

But here's something she doesn't like discussing: In February, state regulators placed limits on her nursing license for the next three years after her former employer alleged that a patient's prescription painkiller turned up missing while she was on duty. She also has been ordered to reimburse the state \$3,500 for the cost of the investigation.

Manriquez says she did nothing wrong. "This is an unjust charge," said the 44-year-old candidate. She is one of three Democrats hoping to replace Rep. Pedro Colón, a Milwaukee Democrat who is retiring. "I do not have anything to hide," Manriquez said.

The nursing home where Manriquez used to work said that in early 2008, a patient was to be given Roxicet, a powerful narcotic that contains oxycodone. But this medicine disappeared during her shift and was replaced with Tylenol, according to the complaint.

Manriquez denied that she had anything to do with the switch. She took a drug test two days after the incident, and it was negative, the settlement says. She said prosecutors looked into the matter and didn't charge her with wrongdoing.

The south side resident said she dropped more than \$15,000 on an attorney to fight the charge. She said she agreed to settle with the state Department of Regulation and Licensing when she ran out of cash.

"I didn't have any more money," she said.

Under the settlement, she can't practice nursing outside Wisconsin for three years. Also, her license would be suspended immediately if she fails a drug test given by a state monitor.

This isn't the first time Manriquez has run into a little trouble.

In 2005, Manriquez, chairwoman of the nonprofit Esperanza Unida, was convicted of disorderly conduct and fined \$167 after she was arrested near her home for being loud and boisterous as police were trying to arrest a male.

Daniel Bice can be contacted by phone at (414) 224-2135 or by e-mail at dbice@journalsentinel.com

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Load-Date: July 19, 2010

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Kraemer & Sons low bidder for Milwaukee's Hoan Bridge project.

The Daily Reporter

July 13, 2010

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Length: 282 words

Body

Byline: Joe Yovino

Edward Kraemer & Sons Inc., Plain, submitted the low bid Tuesday for installation of netting under a portion of the Hoan Bridge over the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District's Jones Island treatment plant.

Kraemer & Sons' bid of \$1.8 million was nearly \$800,000 less than the only other company to bid on the project, Zenith Tech Inc., Waukesha.

Small pieces of concrete began falling from the Hoan Bridge in June, according to a Wisconsin Department of Transportation official. The deterioration prompted a plan to hang netting over Jones Island.

The latest design to add netting to the underside of the bridge is in addition to netting already covering the Summerfest grounds that was built onto the structure in 1993. The new net will stretch from the southern end of the Jones Island treatment plant to the Milwaukee harbor inlet north of the plant, Paul Trombino, WisDOT division operations director, said last month.

WisDOT requested bids for the project June 22. Kraemer's total bid came in at \$1,823,648.50 on Tuesday.

A construction contract for deck repairs to the Hoan, which opened to traffic in 1977, will be let out for bid in September 2010 with work expected to begin by Oct. 1 and be completed in 2011, according to WisDOT. Those repairs are estimated to cost between \$12 and \$17 million.

Last week, state Rep. Christine Sinicki, D-Milwaukee, and state Sen. Jeff Plale, D-South Milwaukee, sent a letter to federal officials asking for money to stabilize safety issues on the Hoan Bridge.

The lawmakers have asked for \$250 million to be diverted from the more than \$800 million Wisconsin received to build high-speed rail between Milwaukee and Madison, Sinicki said.

Load-Date: July 21, 2010

End of Document

Oregon lawmaker calls for end to high-speed rail planning.

The Daily Reporter

July 9, 2010

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Copyright 2010 Dolan Media Newswires

Length: 564 words

Body

Byline: Paul Snyder

A state lawmaker is calling on Gov. Jim Doyle to stop the state's planning for the Milwaukee-to-Madison high-speed rail line.

State Rep. Brett Davis, R-Oregon, said Friday that GOP gubernatorial candidates Scott Walker and Mark Neumann committed to stopping work on the project if they are elected in November, and Wisconsin should pull the plug on the project now.

"It's a misplaced priority," Davis said of high-speed rail. "There are other ways to accomplish transit. Let's talk about details and things like buses that can get people to places as quickly and inexpensively as possible."

The federal government earlier this year awarded \$823 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act money for improvements to make high-speed rail available between Chicago, Milwaukee and Madison, and to determine a route from Wisconsin to the Twin Cities.

Davis, who is running for lieutenant governor and made his request in a letter to Doyle, said if elected he will immediately request sending back the money.

"We should absolutely say, 'Thanks, but no thanks,'" he said. "It's taxpayer money that should be used to pay down the federal debt or used for other transportation needs in Wisconsin."

Doyle's office did not immediately return calls for comment.

However, at a high-speed rail announcement this month in Madison, Doyle said he did not understand the political motivation behind stopping work on the project. He said if Wisconsin rejects the money, another state will use it for a high-speed rail project.

It's a good reason to forge ahead with work on the line, said Steve Hiniker, executive director of 1000 Friends of Wisconsin and a supporter of high-speed rail.

"If we say no to everything, Wisconsin will really be heading for the dark ages," he said. "It's that kind of ignorance that could put Wisconsin as an economic backwater."

Davis said the state's transportation budget is already operating with a \$30 million deficit and building and operating a high-speed rail line will sink Wisconsin further into debt.

At a meeting Thursday of the Wisconsin Innovation Network, Paul Trombino, project manager with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, said the department estimates high-speed rail will cost about \$7 million a year to maintain.

The train will come at an added cost to taxpayers, Hiniker said, but it's not worth rejecting the project.

"We always have to look to the future," he said. "Yeah, we have a deficit. Do we stop schools because we have a deficit? Do we shut down police forces? Libraries? Attracting jobs costs money, so do we shut down the Department of Commerce? No. We invest in things that will make Wisconsin better in the future."

The state's transportation budget needs to be protected and bolstered before it takes on additional burdens, Davis said. He said he supports an idea backed by Walker and Neumann to divert sales tax collected on transportation-related items to the transportation budget.

But even if the transportation budget is made whole, Davis said he wants the state to fix its damaged highways and bridges before investing in a rail system he said many people oppose.

But pulling the plug on high-speed rail now, Hiniker said, would hurt Wisconsin for years.

"Someday we'll be out of the deficit," he said. "And when that day comes, some other place will be getting the benefits of having high-speed rail in their state."

Load-Date: July 17, 2010

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Small pieces of concrete falling from Milwaukee's Hoan Bridge spark netting project.

The Daily Reporter

June 15, 2010

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Length: 712 words

Body

Byline: Sean Ryan

Small pieces of concrete have fallen from the Hoan Bridge, a Wisconsin Department of Transportation official said, prompting a plan to hang a net beneath the Milwaukee structure.

The WisDOT plan is feeding the concerns of a Milwaukee County supervisor who wants the bridge rebuilt.

WisDOT on Tuesday, June 22, will request bids for a contractor to attach a net to the underside of the Hoan Bridge over the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District's Jones Island treatment plant. Bids are due July 13.

Paul Trombino, WisDOT division operations director, said the bridge does not have structural problems, and the cracking concrete is common for aging structures.

"It's routine maintenance for us," he said. "Obviously, we're expanding the netting to catch loose concrete pieces that may fall off."

Trombino said some small concrete pieces had fallen from the bridge, but he said he could not estimate the size of the pieces.

Workers at the Port of Milwaukee, which is under the Hoan Bridge, have noticed pieces of concrete that have fallen off the underside of the span, said Larry Sullivan, chief engineer for the port. He said there are no reports of concrete hitting anybody or causing other problems, so the port has not asked the state to do anything about the falling concrete.

"If you look up, you see holes," Sullivan said. "And if you look down, you see pieces of concrete laying there occasionally."

Although the bridge is structurally sound, cracking concrete is another sign the span needs to be rebuilt or redecked, said Patricia Jursik, a Milwaukee County supervisor who has pressured WisDOT to engineer the project for more than a year.

"It's well beyond its life expectancy, and everybody knows that," Jursik said. "This thing was supposed to be redecked at the last budget cycle, but it wasn't."

Jursik said she supports WisDOT's efforts to maintain the bridge's road surface, but she said the need for a net does not speak well of the structure's overall condition. She said she wants WisDOT to start engineering a project to repair the bridge deck so the work can be included in the upcoming state biennial budget.

The bridge opened to traffic in 1977.

Trombino said WisDOT has no schedule for deciding on more substantial bridge work than ongoing maintenance. He said the net is the best solution in this situation because the Hoan is farther above the ground than most WisDOT structures, making it more difficult for the department to do regular maintenance on the bridge's underside.

It is common for concrete on aging bridges to crack when water seeps into the road, he said.

"A lot of structures have easier accessibility than the Hoan Bridge," Trombino said, "which gives us the ability to deal with it a little easier."

Other examples of nets used in southeastern Wisconsin include one WisDOT installed last year on the Hampton Avenue bridge over U.S. Highway 45 and another installed on the Hoan in 1993 that covers its underside over the Summerfest grounds.

The new net will stretch from the southern end of the Jones Island treatment plant to the Milwaukee harbor inlet north of the plant, Trombino said. The contract also includes repairing the net over the Summerfest grounds.

"We're netting to catch the concrete because, in this case, you have a facility that sits under it," Trombino said, "the same as with Summerfest."

Bill Graffin, MMSD spokesman, said the sewerage district is cooperating with WisDOT because contractors will use portions of the treatment plant property as a staging area for the net project.

"We're working with them on the schedule of getting the work done," he said, "and as far as we know, it's just precautionary."

Jursik said, given the inability to get state money to rebuild the Hoan, she may join the movement calling for a state constitutional amendment that would segregate the Wisconsin transportation budget.

Milwaukee County officials have been reluctant to join the push to put advisory referendums on the November ballot, she said. But Jursik said she is thinking about leading a charge for a referendum in Milwaukee County.

"It's beginning to look very attractive to me," she said. "And I'm beginning to think long and hard about it because eventually the Hoan Bridge is just going to be left holding its hands out."

Load-Date: June 23, 2010

End of Document

Wisconsin Department of Transportation focuses on interchange inch counts.

The Daily Reporter

December 30, 2009

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ASAP

Copyright 2009 Dolan Media Newswires

Length: 439 words

Body

Byline: Sean Ryan

Milwaukee Constructors LLC, in its proposal to fix the Zoo Interchange, suggested the state save money by sparing the damaged bridges from demolition.

That's not going to happen.

The existing bridges have to go because they are too low and sometimes get hit by passing trucks, said Paul Trombino, Wisconsin Department of Transportation division operations director.

Milwaukee/Emergency Bridge Repairs

Obviously, when we get a bridge hit, especially in an interchange, he said, obviously it's a hazard for anyone that's driving.

Milwaukee Constructors will build new bridges to replace the three damaged structures, which will not carry traffic after the project. The joint venture of three contractors proposed putting nets on the old bridges to catch crumbling concrete until the entire Zoo Interchange reconstruction begins.

But the old bridges are only 14 feet 1 inch to 14 feet 10 inches above the highway lanes. The new bridges would leave more room below, but truckers would not benefit from the additional height unless the old bridges are demolished.

We feel confident we can gain a few inches, Trombino said, and that can help us quite a bit.

Trombino said demolishing the bridges also will save the cost of future maintenance.

Milwaukee Constructors estimates demolishing the bridges will cost \$685,000. The new structures, according to the proposal, would be 15 feet high.

Raising the three Zoo Interchange bridges is only one step toward solving a bigger problem, said Wayne Kokta, transportation manager for DST Inc., a sister company to Dawes Rigging and Crane Rental Inc., West Allis. Those bridges are a part of a broken network of routes truckers must maneuver to make deliveries, he said.

Trucks with large loads cannot drive on roads if, for example, there are low railroad bridges, weight limits or power lines overhead, Kokta said.

The route limits lead to delays for DST when delivering construction gear to projects, Kokta said. The irony is the highways can delay work on highway projects, he said.

Especially if you are going any distance at all and you've got a height issue, Kokta said, all you need is one bridge in your way, and you have to go miles out of your way.

State law forbids any truck taller than 13 feet 6 inches from driving on highways, and the limit will never go up if bridges aren't built higher off the ground, Kokta said. National manufacturer associations are asking for almost 30-foot clearances, roughly double what the new Zoo bridges will create, he said.

It looks like the state is at least taking a step in the right direction, Kokta said, although I would like it to be a larger step.

Load-Date: January 8, 2010

End of Document

Emergency bridge repairs shouldn't slow commuters <|> Work to be completed on compressed schedule

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (Wisconsin)

December 3, 2009 Thursday

NOW Early Edition

Copyright 2009 Journal Sentinel Inc.

Section: A News; Pg. 1

Length: 612 words

Byline: STEFANIE SCOTT

Body

By STEFANIE SCOTT

Wauwatosa residents will not have to contend with lengthy road closures when Zoo Interchange bridges undergo emergency repairs next year, state officials say.

Although the Wisconsin Department of Transportation has not yet chosen a construction contractor, it is letting all bidders know they would be allowed only one weekend closure for each of the three bridges:

- * northbound Interstate 894/U.S. Highway 45 through the interchange to north 45;
- * southbound U.S. 45 to the eastbound connector ramp; and
- * northbound I-894/Highway 45 to the westbound Interstate 94 ramp.

"We gave a very narrow window to closures," said Paul Trombino, division operations director. "A way of looking at it is that someone could drive home on the old bridge at 5 p.m. on Friday, then drive to work on Monday riding over the new bridge."

He admits the weekend timeframe for demolition and construction is aggressive, but says a workshop held by the DOT at the end of October gave DOT officials ideas about how the work can be accomplished.

Accelerated construction techniques can speed up the process so the impact to traffic - especially weekday commuters - is minimized, Trombino said.

For example, using a self-propelled modular transport system would allow a bridge to be built off-site, then rolled into place and connected.

"These ideas may be new in this state, but there are cases when this has worked in other states," he said.

During the weekends the bridges are closed, traffic will be detoured to local roads, most likely state highways like Highway 100 or county highways that can handle heavy traffic. Those decisions will be made as the project's start date gets closer, Trombino said.

So far, DOT officials have not contacted city personnel to discuss the impact the bridge repairs could have on local traffic, Wauwatosa Public Works Director William Kappel said.

Planning will be needed for Highway 100/Mayfair Road, Watertown Plank Road and other surrounding streets that already accomodate heavy traffic on a daily basis, said State Sen. Jim Sullivan, who represents a portion of Wauwatosa.

Thousands of employees of the Milwaukee Regional Medical Complex and Milwaukee County Research Park, visitors to the Milwaukee County Zoo and shoppers heading to Mayfair Mall rely on the interchange and surrounding streets to get to their destinations. On average, 350,000 cars travel through the interchange each day, he said.

DOT officials plan to impose financial penalties on the contractor if lane closures occur during the peak hours of 5:30 to 9 a.m. or 2 to 8 p.m. on weekdays and 1 to 7 p.m. on weekends. In addition, \$10,000 will be assessed for every day beyond the May 24 deadline the project remains incomplete.

The work must be done soon - no start date has been set yet - because the bridges are deteriorating and will not hold up for the two years before work can begin on the complete interchange reconstruction, Sullivan said.

Bridge inspections show cracks in supports and riding surfaces, and a high concentration of chloride, which leads to corrosion. The riding surface could fail and concrete could fall onto lanes below, according to DOT project documents.

The repairs will allow trucks to carry heavy loads through the interchange and lengthen the functional life of the bridges, but will not replace the need for reconstruction, which has been put off due to the state budget deficit.

* Commentary: State Sen. Jim Sullivan weighs in on interchange. Page 17

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Marquette Interchange contractors reunite for Zoo bid.

The Daily Reporter

December 1, 2009

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Body

Byline: Sean Ryan

The Zoo Interchange bridge repair attracted only one proposal because small builders cannot handle the job and three large companies teamed up for the bid.

A joint venture called Milwaukee Constructors LLC submitted the only proposal for the repair project in Milwaukee County. The three companies in the joint venture are Edward Kraemer & Sons Inc., Plain; Lunda Construction Co., Black River Falls; and Zenith Tech Inc., Waukesha.

The team is the same that formed the Marquette Constructors LLC joint venture and won three major contracts on the Marquette Interchange reconstruction.

Walsh Construction Co., Chicago, offered the only bidding competition on the Marquette job, winning two contracts.

Walsh did not submit a proposal for the Zoo Interchange.

Ryan Pheifer, project manager for Neenah-based Pheifer Brothers Construction Co. Inc., which is a bridge builder, said there is an upside the three large companies teaming up to pursue a big state contract.

I don't have a huge problem with it, he said, because I'd much rather see the work stay with our contractors in the state.

A Wisconsin Department of Transportation panel is reviewing the construction proposal from Milwaukee Constructors and will make a decision about awarding the contract this week or next week, said Chris Klein, executive assistant to WisDOT secretary Frank Busalacchi. The project is estimated to cost between \$12 million and \$22 million.

Gary Ruzic, president of Ruzic Construction Co. Inc., a Neillsville-based bridge builder, said he didn't bother to look at the Zoo Interchange repair project because his company cannot take on projects with budgets larger than \$1.5 million.

But Ruzic, Pheifer and others from small bridge-building companies in the state are urging WisDOT to break bridge projects out from larger highway reconstruction jobs to be bid as separate, smaller contracts.

It's something we've been fighting for, for pretty much our entire existence, Pheifer said.

WisDOT tried new ways to set aside smaller contracts when it rebuilt the Marquette Interchange, said Paul Trombino, WisDOT transportation system development division operations director. For example, he said, the agency bid out a separate contract for the fabrication of metal railings for bridges on the Marquette.

When we worked on a lot of the megaprojects, Trombino said, we wanted to make sure that we were creating opportunities for a wide variety of firms.

But the size of a bridge contract is dictated by the structure, he said. A bridge has three major parts -- approaches, girders and deck-- and all must be bid under one contract, Trombino said.

Although large projects such as the Zoo Interchange get a lot of attention, WisDOT bids out many small bridge projects that match the capacity of companies such as Pheifer and Ruzic, Trombino said.

WisDOT's April 28 bid letting for American Recovery and Reinvestment Act projects included 16 bridge projects, and each contract was worth less than \$1 million. Pheifer Brothers won two contracts, and Ruzic Construction landed three. Edward Kraemer won four, and Lunda won two.

Our bidding situation against the big three, it's very tough, Ruzic said. There's a lot of competition.

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Lunda Construction has a big day.

The Daily Reporter

September 10, 2003

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Body

Byline: Chris Thompson

If Tuesday's bid letting holds true, Lunda Construction Co. will net \$10.9 million in Wisconsin Department of Transportation road contracts. <P>The Black River Falls contractor topped its list of apparent victories with a \$6.7 million bid to construct the Middleton bypass structures, which are part of a U.S. Highway 12 widening project from Sauk City to Middleton. That project was the largest in WisDOT's September bid letting, and it should reach completion by Oct. 1, 2005. <P>Lunda edged out Zenith Tech Inc., Waukesha, for the Middleton work. Zenith came in about \$400,000 over with a bid of \$7.1 million. <P>Lunda followed up the Middleton project with the apparent low bid of \$3.3 million for bridge work on U.S. Highway 10 in Portage County, a \$680,302 bid for work on the Pecatonica Bridge in Grant County and a \$271,779 bid for road work in Jackson County. <P>While Lunda apparently captured the month's largest bid, Northwind Concrete, South Beloit, Ill., caught WisDOT's attention with its apparent low bid of \$1.2 million for road work on East Washington Avenue in Madison. Northwind beat out Madison Concrete Pipe Inc., Madison, by about \$120,000 for that job. <P>"This is prep work for the East Washington project," said Paul Trombino, WisDOT's chief proposal management engineer. "It's construction of a huge box culvert. We were pretty curious about that one." <P>More road work <P>Other large projects passing through Tuesday's bid letting included Stevens Point and Mosinee Interstate 39 road work, which James Cape & Sons Co., Racine, apparently won with a \$6.1 million bid, and St. Croix County Interstate 94 and U.S. Highway 63 interchange work, which Hoffman Construction Co., Black River Falls, apparently won with a \$5.9 million bid. <P>Two of the tighter bids of the month included both a large and small project. B.R. Amon & Sons Inc., Elkhorn, beat out Northeast Asphalt Inc., Greenville, by \$67,000 for a \$3 million road work project covering about 16 miles of U.S. Highway 151 in Sherwood. <P>Highway Landscapers Inc., Kaukauna, edged out Capitol Pavers Inc., New Berlin, by about \$1,700 with a \$38,000 bid for clearing and grubbing work on County Highway J in Waukesha County. <P>WisDOT should finalize Tuesday's bids by Friday. <P><P>

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Germantown says its running out of room for business expansion

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (Wisconsin)

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Byline: WILLIAM BREYFOGLE

Dateline: Germantown

Body

Room for business expansion in Germantown is nearing its limit, members of the village's business community were told Tuesday.

At a luncheon sponsored by the Germantown Chamber of Commerce, spokesmen from the village government, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and the village's industrial park all delivered a "state of village business" briefing to about 100 members.

Village Administrator Paul Brandenburg said that the village, which recently had drawn up borders for the sewer system, also had drawn borders for industrial expansion.

Special to the Journal Sentinel

On a chart of the village, Brandenburg showed a large sewer area that would have added about 5,000 square acres to the sewer system.

However, after several public hearings and staff meetings, the village voted to expand the system at its four corners, adding much less.

"It was a question of pro-growth versus no growth," he said. "We heard from people who wanted to be urban, and others who wanted us to stay rural. It really got out of hand."

Part of what he termed the "fallout" from that decision is that now only about 60 acres are left for expansion in the village's industrial areas.

While he admitted that some businesses had been allowed to build outside of the sewer service area, Brandenburg said it was unlikely that large industries would be allowed to do so.

Brandenburg added that there also were about 300 acres available on the village's southeast corner, but none of that land is owned by the village, and he worried that the land soon would be bought up by developers, which would effectively cap growth to the village's industrial and business tax base.

"At that point, we are going to have difficulty in trying to keep the tax base growing," he said.

Nevertheless, chamber members praised Brandenburg for working with businesses, saying that the village hadn't always listened to business owners in the past.

"In the past, the voice of business in the village had been kind of hard to hear," said chamber member Scott Rasmussen, one of the luncheon sponsors.

On a high note, DOT officials said that businesses in the village soon would have an easier time getting their goods to market along the village's main street, Mequon Road.

Paul Trombino, spokesman for the DOT team in charge of the expansion project, which is widening Mequon Road from two lanes to four, said the project was back on schedule and probably would be finished by the end of the year.

A wet spring and heavy summer rains slowed down the project, he said, but contractors made up for lost time recently by working double shifts to catch up.

As of Tuesday, the new eastbound lanes were completed, with the existing westbound lanes being excavated and regraded. Trombino expected to have initial coats of asphalt on both lanes by the end of the year, with lighting and signals installed and operating.

Crews would return again in the spring to apply final coats of asphalt and finish landscaping, he said.

He cautioned the audience that a harsh, early winter could delay the project.

"Weather can still be a problem," he said. "It's hard to predict in Wisconsin."

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