

# Job Training Study Committee Meets

A legislative study committee met November 3<sup>rd</sup> to analyze Iowa's job training programs and provide any recommendations to the Legislature for changes. The committee was charged with examining job training issues and needs, with a particular focus on underserved populations.

The committee heard presentations about youth job training, community college job training programs, workforce self-sufficiency and non-profit organizations, and offender reentry programs. Presenters stressed the need for collaboration with job training programs.

The Iowa Department of Workforce Development indicated that over the past year, they have had an increase of 115% in services. The latest numbers from September show there were 113,000 unemployed people in Iowa. That number was 71,000 a year ago.

Iowa's unemployment rate stands at 6.7%, while the national unemployment rate is 9.8%. However, the department stressed that even before the rise in unemployment, Iowa was experiencing a skill worker shortage.

Iowa could still face a workforce shortage when the economy recovers. Legislators heard updates from the Departments of Human Services and Workforce Development on the Family Investment Program and the Workforce Investment Act. These programs have received more funding to serve more families.

The underserved populations the committee focused on included people earning less than \$20,000 per year, women, minorities, persons with disabilities, elderly, and convicted felons trying to reenter society after they are released from prison.

The committee will study all the materials presented to them at the meeting, and will determine at a future date if any recommendations need to be forwarded to the 2010 Legislature.