

Jobs & Small Business Assistance

To help Iowans through the national recession, the legislature worked to create good paying jobs and to help Iowans find work.

A new \$5.2 million small business loan fund is created to help small businesses and entrepreneurs expand and create jobs. Another measure will allow more small businesses to qualify for low-interest loans through their bank. In addition, a website clearinghouse is created with information on all technical and financial assistance available for businesses in Iowa.

In addition to reviewing state tax credits to ensure they are creating the jobs promised, the Legislature shifted dollars away from large Wall Street companies and moved some of those dollars to support struggling Main Street businesses whose success will benefit more Iowans.

All businesses will benefit from action taken by the Legislature that will save \$88 million for employers in Unemployment Insurance taxes.

House File 2522 provides an additional \$100,000 for Small Business Development Centers that provide one on one counseling and support to small businesses at 15 locations across Iowa.

The bill also expands the statewide MyEntre.Net program to help accelerate the growth of firms most likely to create jobs in Iowa while improving access to services and capital for hundreds of other Iowa companies.

Another measure approved continues support for over 55 Workforce Development Centers across Iowa that help the unemployed find work and provide job training assistance. The centers also provide services to employers looking to hire employees.

Building on the I-Jobs initiative last year, the Legislature used gaming revenues to provide \$14 million for revitalization efforts of Main Street communities and \$45 million for flood recovery, prevention, and infrastructure improvements.

House File 2076 creates an Iowa Innovation Council (ICC). The council would include members of Iowa's targeted industries of advanced manufacturing, life sciences and biosciences. The IIC will help develop innovation and entrepreneurship in science, manufacturing and technology driven businesses. This nonpartisan and industry lead group would also be responsible for coordinating and executing state applications for federal funds related to science, and technology. Another goal of the council will be to expand our technically ready workforce.

Iowa will now be able to better demonstrate what properties are ready for development, and compete with other Midwest states that have a similar program. The Department of Economic Development will develop a site certification program to do soil samples, wetlands impact, historic artifacts concerns or other items. This will help identify what action is needed so the sites can be used for developments.

With passage of Senate File 2387, Iowa will no longer be one of only seven states that do not provide a sales tax exemption on blood bags and equipment at a regional blood center. This will help Iowa compete for high tech laboratory jobs. The exemption would be allowed if a regional blood center is located in Iowa before January 1, 2011.

The Legislature also passed two bills that will protect Iowa's auto dealers. The first bill, Senate File 2234, strengthens Iowa's motor vehicle franchise laws by not allowing unfair requirements or laws to be placed upon Iowa's dealers. It is in response to closings and other changes the three big automakers made affecting Iowa auto dealers.

Another bill protects dealers with payment for warranty work done by a dealer. Under the bill, a motor vehicle manufacturer, distributor, or importer is not allowed to reduce the amount of compensation, or to disallow the claim for warranty work, if the dealer submits the paperwork for the warranty work within 60 days from the date that the work was completed.