



Nick's News from the
Iowa House of Representatives
 State of Iowa
Eighty-Third General Assembly
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Second week of the 83rd General Assembly

The second week of session was slow and emotional due to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, the Presidential Inauguration and the passing of two of our great former legislators Senator Mary Lundby, and Representative Rosemary Thomson. Both were respected leaders and promoted women in government and served the current House District 36 at one time. The House and Senate both passed resolutions honoring Senator Lundby this past week and are planning to honor Rep. Thomson next week.

Work continued on a disaster relief bill and the legislature is working swiftly to write legislation that creates real help for the disaster affected areas of Iowa. A disaster relief bill made some progress this week. The bill was passed out of the Rebuild Iowa Committee on Wednesday and was sent to the Appropriations Committee on Thursday in hopes that it will be ready for debate and voting on the floor of the Legislature next week. There is widespread support for this bill and hopes are high that it will pass quickly. We need to get help to those that need it after the disasters of last summer. The proposed relief provides \$56 million from the Economic Emergency Fund for housing assistance, individual assistance grants, and community assistance grants to cities and counties.

The state budget is still at the forefront of our efforts as well and subcommittees also met for the first time this week. Budget subcommittees are joint committees meaning they have members from the Senate and the House and they conduct joint budget hearings during January and February and provide recommendations are passed on to the full Appropriations Committees and to the floor for debate in each chamber. The subcommittees are categorized according to general subject areas. I and my colleagues will be asking each department to provide detailed information during the budget review process such as number of full time positions that have been added in the past year, what the impacts of those positions are including salary and benefits, suggestions on how to reduce the budget and/or the responsibilities, and any services that could be leased, sold or privatized.

Hopefully answers to these questions will help us to make informed decisions when we receive the Governor's proposed budget which is expected the last week in January. I am hopeful that the budget will contain the necessary spending cuts to allow Iowa to regain its financial footing, because we cannot continue to spend and tax our way out of the budget mess we are in.

I had the opportunity to visit with some of Iowa's Veterans from The American Legion as they visited the capitol on Thursday to share their concerns. I got to meet Ron Tyne and his wife Jackie, Bob Berridge and his wife Janice and Nick Lucy (pictured below) and we were able to get some pictures at the Speakers desk. I have great admiration for the men and women who have served and are serving our country and my thanks go out to them.



Remembering our Leaders...



Sen. Mary Lundby



Rep. Rosemary Thomson

Both Senator Mary Lundby and Representative Rosemary Thomson were passionate and respected leaders. Both have been helpful in my career in politics and I am honored that I have the opportunity to follow in their footsteps. Both will be missed by those who knew them and our thoughts and prayers are with their families.

Senator Lundby served 22 years in the Legislature and was known and respected for her bipartisan attitude and fighting for those that couldn't fight for themselves. Senator Lundby was Iowa's first female Speaker Pro Tempore, and the first female Leader of the Senate. Senator Lundby was also an advocate for the environment and conservation.

Representative Rosemary Thomson served as a Representative until 2001 after being elected in a special election in 1995 to replace Senator Lundby when she was elected to the Senate. Representative Thomson was passionate about education and won state awards for her work in the area. She also served in numerous positions at the U.S. Department of Education.



Committee News

Commerce

Introductions and Assignment of Bills

Bills

**Local Government
 (Ranking Member)**

Cancelled

Transportation

Introductions, Assignment of Bills
 And presentation on road funding.

Ways and Means

Cancelled

**IRS announces expansion of
 E-file program for Iowa
 Taxpayers**

Federal income taxes are due April 15th and Iowa income taxes are due April 30th.

According to IRS Commissioner Doug Shulman, "Filing electronically with direct deposit can get refunds to taxpayers in as few as 10 days."

Iowa taxpayers can benefit from a step-by-step tutorial by using a number of commercial software applications compatible with the e-file and the Free File programs. Free File is a federal tax preparation and electronic filing program, free of charge, available to taxpayers with an Adjusted Gross Income of \$56,000 or less in 2008.

Iowa taxpayers can access these programs through their tax preparers or from their home computer. For information about the programs visit www.irs.gov and follow the appropriate links on the left hand side of the homepage.