

Peter Cownie
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
Sixtieth District
Statehouse: (515) 281-3221
e-mail -
peter.cownie@legis.state.ia.us

HOME ADDRESS
686 58th Place
West Des Moines, IA 50266
Home: (515) 664-8341



House of Representatives

State of Iowa
Eighty-Third General Assembly
STATEHOUSE
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

COMMITTEES
Appropriations
Economic Growth
Education
Labor

APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
Economic Development,
Ranking Member

Newsletter #9
3-16-09

The day is coming that we have all been waiting for in the Legislature. This Friday, March 20th is when the non-partisan Legislative Services Agency will release its quarterly revenue projections. These are the tax dollars coming into the state's coffers and the number the Legislature uses to craft a budget for the state. Last December's Revenue Estimating Conference was the catalyst for Governor Culver's 1.5% across the board cut.

So, how much revenue will the State of Iowa expect to bring in this March 20th? If unemployment and the stock market are indicators, my guess is that estimate will come at a number that will necessitate further cuts.

These cuts should have already been made by the Legislature. Iowans are hurting. Employers are hurting. Employees are hurting. Lifestyles are changing and families are making hard decisions on everything from what to eat to college funds for their children. The state of Iowa should make the hard decisions too. Instead, the Legislature has chosen to wait and see what the March revenue numbers show. It is apparent that businesses and families are not making as much money as they were a year ago. Therefore, tax revenues will not be as high as expected.

What does all of this mean? It means that every state program is going to have to take a further cut to its funding. Schools, health-care, roads, and funding for what seems like countless other programs will all take a hit. The Legislature has also chosen to wait and see what the federal spending package will deliver for Iowa. The latest numbers are just about \$1.9 billion for Iowa. These one-time dollars will be used in a variety of ways. A good portion will be used to "backfill" state spending from past years and future years. Wouldn't it be nice if Iowa families were able to call in the federal government like this when times got tough? That is exactly what the State of Iowa has done.

This session will be remembered for the horrific economic times and the budget that was passed. Sadly, the Iowa Legislature has passed the buck to the federal government and future General Assemblies with these decisions. I truly hope I am wrong with these March revenue numbers. I doubt it though.

Peter Cownie (R-West Des Moines), represents District 60 in the Iowa House of Representatives. The district includes most of West Des Moines in Polk County. He can be reached via e-mail at Peter.Cownie@legis.state.ia.us or by phone at 281-3221.