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# THE HAWK EYE

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BURLINGTON, IOWA WEDNESDAY APRIL 23, 2014

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## Water quality bill deemed a 'good start'

Sands believes Branstad will sign the legislation.

By ELIZABETH MEYER  
emeyer@thehawkeye.com

After more than two hours of deliberations, the Iowa House of Representatives approved a water quality bill late last Monday night.

Sponsored by House Republicans, the legislation passed 66-33 despite concerns from about the bill's limitations. The proposal establishes a \$47.9 million framework in state funding for water quality between now and 2020.

Gov. Terry Branstad's water quality initiative was met with skepticism on both sides when

he unveiled the plan in January, resulting in the Republican-led alternative. Branstad's proposal redirects a portion of revenue generated by the 1-cent sales tax to water quality projects. Revenue generated from the sales tax is funneled into the SAVE — Secure an Advanced Vision for Education — fund, which finances school

infrastructure projects.

The Republicans' alternative moves \$22 million from the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund — currently used to pay for improvements and upgrades to state facilities — to a water quality infrastructure fund. An additional \$245.9 million would come from a tax on metered water. Iowans already pay

through their water bills. Funds from the five-percent sales tax end up in the state's general fund and a fund for school infrastructure projects.

A wastewater and drinking water treatment financial assistance program also would be established to provide financial assistance to install or upgrade wastewater treatment facilities

and systems, including source water protection projects. Engineering or technical assistance for facility planning and design also would be provided under the new fund.

Under House File 2451, priority must be given to projects in a "disadvantaged community" and systems, including source water protection projects. Engineering or technical assistance for facility planning and design also would be provided under the new fund.

See Bill on page 4A

## Housing crunch



Jill Brown/The Hawk Eye

Burlington residents listen to Aaron Gruen, left, and Debra Jeans, both of Gruen Gruen and Associates, during a presentation about a housing study Tuesday at Greater Burlington Partnership in Burlington. The study suggests more housing is needed in Burlington and throughout Des Moines County.

## Study: Burlington needs 1,500 more homes by 2025

Report says household size has been decreasing along with the population.

By JULIA SHUMWAY  
jshumway@thehawkeye.com

The Burlington area will need a net of 1,500 new homes by 2025 to keep pace with economic development and older homes growing obsolete, according to a study presented Tuesday night at the Greater Burlington Partnership.

Des Moines County, the cities of Burlington and West Burlington and Alliant Energy partnered to commission the study from the Chicago branch of Gruen Gruen and Associates.

The study found household size has been decreasing along with population, meaning more houses are

"What's the worst? Not having enough properties or five years down the road, having enough houses but not enough people to live in them?"

Shane McCampbell,  
Burlington mayor

used even though fewer total people live in the area. About 40 percent of homes in the Burlington area were built before 1920 and have a median value of \$70,000.

"In short, you have households that are older, but there are a lot of them," researcher Aaron N. Gruen said.

Looking at economic development and new jobs added during the past few years, Gruen and collaborator Debra L. Jeans determined Burlington would need at least

1,500 new homes to supplement the 18,400 currently occupied in Burlington.

But new construction isn't cheap. "For new development to be feasible, sales prices have to approximate \$180 per square foot or higher," Jeans said.

Household incomes in Burlington decreased 12 percent since 2000, the study found. Most households now are trying to live on \$15,000 a year — not enough to buy a 1,500-square-foot home for \$270,000, which is

what developers would have to charge to make a profit.

"For the smaller segment of the market that can afford to pay higher prices for housing, it's feasible to build houses for that market," Gruen said. "You have this need, but it's hard to serve this need in a way for the private market to do."

Larger developments that can buy construction materials in bulk bring down construction costs, Gruen said. City tax incentives for new construction, revitalization of existing older homes and employers who build housing for their workforce are other options.

Scott Perle, a developer and owner of Two Properties LLC, said incentives should be used for higher-end development, like homes costing \$250,000 or more, not just for less expensive houses.

See Study on page 4A

## Grassley, Garland meet for breakfast

Senator thanked Obama's court pick for his service but held firm on no hearings this year.

By ALAN FRAM  
Afram@thehawkeye.com

WASHINGTON — Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Charles Grassley told President Barack Obama's Supreme Court nominee Tuesday the Senate won't advance his nomination "during this hyper-partisan election year," the lawmaker's office said.

Grassley's breakfast meeting with federal judge Merrick Garland was "cordial and pleasant" and lasted about 70 minutes, according to a written statement released by the Iowa Republican's aides.

See Grassley on page 4A

## Medicaid managed care spurs questions

Iowa DHS, MCOs address concerns about newly implemented program

By ELIZABETH MEYER  
emeyer@thehawkeye.com

Iowa is about two weeks into the launch of Medicaid managed care, giving health care providers and Medicaid recipients a first look at the new system.

Departments of Human Services officials and representatives of the three managed care organizations were on hand Tuesday afternoon for a public comment meeting at the Pazzaz Convention and Events Center in Burlington.

The health care network once managed by the state, now known as IA Health Link, was turned over April 1 to three private, for-profit insurance companies responsible for coordinating services for 560,000 poor and disabled Iowans who rely on Medicaid for their health care needs.

See Medicaid on page 4A

## Oil pipeline work moves forward in Lee County

Last week, the Iowa Utilities Board issued Dakota Access a permit for the pipeline.

By SARAH TOMKINSON  
stomkinson@thehawkeye.com

MONTEBEOSE — Less than a week after Dakota Access received a per-

mit for a crude oil pipeline running through Lee County, Kookok Municipal Waterworks officials have concerns about the future of the city's water supply.

Ryan Drenner of Chippewa Resources gave his weekly update to Lee County supervisors during the informational meeting Tues-

day morning at the sheriff's office.

During the report, Kookok Municipal Waterworks general manager Andrea Rogers said she wanted to open up discussion between the pipeline company and her department. "We want to make sure they have appropriate communication meth-

ods with us, especially since the pipeline is going to go under the Mississippi River," Rogers said.

If something was to happen to the pipe, and it leaked oil into the Mississippi River, she said she wants to make sure her department is contacted in a timely manner.

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See pages 2C & 3C

FROM THE FRONT

City hiring assistant city manager for public works

By JULIA SHUMWAY  
jshumway@thehawkeye.com

The city of Burlington is looking to fill a newly created position to oversee the public works department and fill in for the city manager when needed.

Public works director Steve Hoam-

brecher plans to step back to overseeing only the transit division for a few months before moving on from the city entirely, city manager Jim Ferneaus said. With the position opening up, the city looks for a way to fill two slots with one stone by finding someone who also could act as city manager in Ferneaus' absence.

"There isn't really a good position in the city for that right now," Ferneaus said.

A job opening for an assistant city manager for public works was posted late Tuesday afternoon, with no closing date. If the city can't find someone who

meets all the criteria, it will look for only a public works director, Ferneaus said. The job's starting salary ranges from about \$83,000 to \$95,500 depending on qualifications. It calls for a bachelor's degree in civil engineering, construction or public administration and seven years of experience.

Pipeline

Continued from page 1A

Kevok's water supply comes from south of where the oil pipeline will be cutting across the Mississippi River.

"We want to make sure she is up to date on what is happening with the bore, because for Kevok, that's our drinking water," said Lee County supervisor Matt Pflug, who is Kevok's representative on the board.

"It's not the initial setup, it's five years down the road."

Dremer said he will try to contact Dakota Access environmental personnel to start conversations with Rogers.

On Friday, the Iowa Utilities Board issued Dakota Access the pipeline for their permit, allowing them to do any necessary pre-construction work, which Dremer and his crew must supervise.

Dremer said once the Army Corp of Engineers approves plans for the bore across the Mississippi, the pipeline work will begin in Lee County.

"We're not sure on the time frame of the Army Corp of Engineers, but once it's approved, the bore is going to be the No. 1 priority," Dremer said.

Once the bore is done, crews will work on installing the pipe throughout the rest of the county. The pipeline will cut across the Mississippi, south of Mankato, working its way northwest before dipping into Van Buren County.

The estimated start date is May 20, but Dremer said it could change.

In other news, the board of supervisors approved of the county engineer's five-year road plan.

For this upcoming year, Ernie Steffenhagen plans to replace culverts on 120th Street, 110th Street, 160th Avenue and 170th Street and replace Abel Roads and 15th Street bridges. They also plan to resurface 24th St., the Old US 61 near Summitville.

The cost for next year's plan is \$6.5 million.

Steffenhagen said he makes his five-year plans based on funds available the upcoming year. The county has seen an extra \$500,000 from the increase gas tax passed by lawmakers last year.

Study

Continued from page 1A

"I have trouble with the city encouraging near poor people to come to Burlington, and I think that's what that does," he said.

But even \$100,000 homes aren't necessarily affordable for the young people the Burlington area wants to attract, contract-woman Anne Wilson said.

Wilson, 26, said she wanted to buy a home but couldn't get a mortgage for more than \$50,000 because of her job-to-income ratio.

"We can't afford homes with yards. It's not feasible right now," Wilson said. "We're getting a lot of entry-level jobs, and they're not going to be making a lot of money."

Mayor Shane McCampbell questioned whether there even was a housing need in Burlington. An aging community — 7,000 of the households studied had people older than 65 — means people are dying, said McCampbell, adding he'd officiated over one funeral last weekend and been asked to do two others.

"I'm not seeing a problem — I just don't understand where the big drastic need is," McCampbell said. "What's the worst? Not having enough properties or five years down the road, having enough houses but not enough people in them?"

Medicaid

Continued from page 1A

Lindsay Buechel, Iowa Medicaid's member services manager, said DHS will host one public comment meeting a month through 2016 in cities throughout the state to help educate health care providers and Medicaid recipients on the new system.

About 98 percent of former Iowa Medicaid members made the transition two weeks ago to IA Health Link.

Amerigroup Iowa, AmeriHealth Caritas Iowa and UnitedHealthcare Plan of the River Valley now manage the state's \$1.2 billion Medicaid program.

Several health care providers asked questions and voiced their opinions during the public comment meeting, including Hope Haven executive director Bob Bartles, who was optimistic about the effects on Medicaid recipients thus far.

"We serve around 500 folks or so in southeast Iowa, and the majority of them are Medicaid recipients," Bartles said. "Twelve days into managed care, I would say it's going well. There's no individual that we serve that I can point to and say their services are harmed as a result of this transition. So, so far so good."

He cited a few "logistical" concerns that could become problematic in the future, namely the loss of reimbursement rates. Hope Haven only has signed contracts with two of the three MCOs because one of the organizations could not match current reimbursement rates for the services they provide.

"We view that as a problem, in that we want to contract with all the MCOs and not have a gap in provider network type stuff. So that's a lingering issue, you might say," Bartles added.

Leti Lebeck, regional business office consultant with Trillium Healthcare, said several hospitals in the region she serves are not contracted with UnitedHealthcare, causing concern among long-term care residents attempting to navigate the new system.

"Residents are panicking that they're not going to have a hospital to go to because they were auto-assigned to an MCO that the hospital isn't contracted with," Lebeck said. "And their entrances are wandering, OK, now what do we do if we have an emergency and we have to send this member out and they have one MCO and the local hospital isn't contracted with that MCO? So there's causing some questions on both sides, for providers in long term care and our members in long term care."

Trillium is a nationwide healthcare organization, operating 29 long-term care facilities in Iowa.

Patty Frause with Great River Physicians and Clinics was concerned mem-

How to contact your Medicaid managed care provider in Iowa

The Hawk Eye

Amerigroup Iowa, AmeriHealth Caritas Iowa and UnitedHealthcare Plan of the River Valley now manage the state's \$1.2 billion Medicaid program.

They can be contacted at:  
• Amerigroup Iowa: Iowa-medicaid@amerigroup.com or call (800) 454-3739

• AmeriHealth Caritas Iowa: Email: IowaProviderNetwork@amerihealthcaritas.com or call (555) 650-3442

• UnitedHealthcare Plan of the River Valley: Email: IowaConsumerNetwork@uhc.com or call (888) 690-3462

For more information about IA Health Link, visit iahealthlink.gov.

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Lindsay Buechel of Des Moines gives a presentation during a public comment session to discuss Medicaid managed care Tuesday at the Prazz Convention and Event Center in Burlington. The health care network once private by the state, now known as IA Health Link, was turned over April 1 to three private, for-profit insurance companies responsible for coordinating services for 560,000 poor and disabled Iowans who rely on Medicaid for their health care needs.

bers had not yet received an IA Health Link card from their managed care organization.

Buechel said the ID cards should have been mailed to members by this time, but if someone hadn't received their card yet, she would recommend they

contact DHS to make sure the department has their current mailing address.

Overall, Frause said, the transition was "going really well, really smooth." "I feel pretty good about it right now," she said. "I think it's going to be a good change."

Grassley

Continued from page 1A

Grassley has been a favorite target of Democrats criticizing Republicans for their refusal to consider Obama's nomination this year GOP opposition has been led by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., with Grassley refusing to allow his committee to hold even the usual hearings for the nominee.

Grassley evaded reporters waiting for him outside the Senate Hearing Room in the Capitol, where he met with Garland. He had said in advance that he would recede to the judge the Republican position that the Senate won't consider a nominee until the new president elected this November makes a selection.

"As he indicated last week, Grassley explains why the Senate won't be moving forward during this hyper-partisan election year," Grassley's five-sentence statement said.

Grassley thanked Judge Garland for his service.

Garland as usual said nothing to reporters.

Obama nominated Garland last month to fill the vacancy created by the February death of Justice Antonin Scalia.

Matt Scalia, the high court is balanced 4-4 between justices who usually lean liberal or conservative.

With voters about to choose a new president and control of Congress at stake in November, Republicans don't want to infuriate conservative voters and approve a justice who could tip the court in the liberal direction.

The judge had three other Senate meetings Tuesday, including with two Republicans, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania. Like Grassley, Murkowski and Toomey have lined up behind McConnell in saying no nominee should be considered this year.

After an hour-long meeting with the judge's intelligence but said he doubted he would be a "sufficiently aggressive chief" on the Obama administration's use of executive power.

"For something as important as the fundamental balance of the court for a generation, the American people should have the maximum say" by picking the next president, Toomey said.

A spokeswoman for Murkowski said the senator had a private meeting with Garland Tuesday morning and discussed issues important to Alaska.

Grassley, Murkowski and Toomey are up for re-election this year. Grassley is heavily favored to win, but he drew a well-known Democratic chal-

lenger, former U.S. Gov. Patty Murray, who is confident in his decision to block a Supreme Court nominee.

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said Tuesday on the Senate floor, citing the private breakfast and accusing him of stuffing committee business.

"This is the behavior of a senator who knows he's on the wrong side of the Constitution and the wrong side of history," conservative groups issued statements supporting Grassley.

Carrin Sevastyan, chief counsel of the Judicial Crisis Network, praised Grassley for opposing Obama's effort to confirm "another liberal judge who will ensure the left dominates the Supreme Court for a generation or more."

Democrats and liberal groups have used demonstrations and press conferences to pressure Grassley back in Iowa.

Keith Uhl, a Republican attorney who helped manage Grassley's first Senate campaign, told reporters on a conference call Monday the Senate should "man up and vote" on Garland.

In Des Moines, the Rural Cafe coffee shop was remaining open after owner Denise Diaz was approached by liberal groups. Listings on Tuesday included "Obstruction: Data, oatmeal topped with hemp nuts, and the Justice Delayed" bowls, which was steamed greens roasted with peppers and olives.

There has been criticism that the bill only shuffles money from one fund to another, Sands said. "But obviously, the money has to come from somewhere, whether it's from another fund or the taxpayer. No matter what we spend, it's shifting funds around."

In his opinion, revenue redirected from the SAVE fund is a negligible amount and not one of his concerns about the bill.

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Bill

Continued from page 1A

Rep. Dave Heaton, R-Mount Pleasant, voted in favor of the bill. Heaton said water quality is a "very important issue for this session" and is hopeful a compromise will be struck between the two chambers.

"I know that a compromise has to be reached with the Senate, and hopefully, this will get the ball rolling," Heaton said Tuesday.

While he was satisfied with the overall direction of the bill, Heaton said he would like to see an oversight provision included in the final draft to assess if progress is being made in the state's water quality infrastruc-

ture.

"I would've liked to have seen an independent evaluation of the progress," he said. "In our House oversight bill, we are having an independent contractor evaluate the data and let the legislation and the public know whether we are making progress with managed care. I would like to see the same type of process in the water quality bill, and we didn't quite have that."

Heaton was skeptical the Legislature would convoke this session but he tentatively scheduled April 19 recess but he was committed to enacting

water quality legislation before lawmakers leave Des Moines.

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