

■ POLK ■ DES MOINES ■

# TAXPAYERS

■ ASSOCIATION ■

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**You are invited to attend the  
2010 Annual Luncheon Meeting Friday, January 22nd at Wakonda Club  
We are pleased to present Alan Kemp,  
Executive Director of the Iowa League of Cities.  
Please RSVP by Friday, January 15, 2010.  
The cost for attending is \$25 each.**

## **PRAIRIE MEADOWS UPDATE**

By Ron Morden, PDMTA representative to the PMRC board

Prairie Meadows will shortly be starting another referendum year. Next November, Polk County voters will again vote on continuing to allow PMRC to operate a casino for the years 2011 through 2018. Historically, Polk County voters have approved the referendum issue by the largest margin in any county referendum vote in Iowa.

The changes in the PMRC board this year were minimal. John Rowen was elected to replace Perry Chapin, whose 6 years on the board made him ineligible for continued service. Linette Rasmussen, Bob Beattie and myself were also given second 3 year terms. The Des Moines Partnership filled its vacant non-voting seat by appointing Mike Helak to that position.

Officers remain the same but bylaws require that no one serve more than two years in any officer or committee chairmanship position. There will be major changes at the end of 2010. Three of the four officers (Chair: Mike Galloway, Secretary: Gerry Neugent and Immediate Past Chair: Jack Bishop) will be leaving the board, as well as another key member of the board, Grants Committee chair: Tom Whitney. In 2010, I will continue to serve as Vice Chair of the board and a member of the Executive committee.

The total of \$2 million in Legacy grants for 2009 will benefit 14 organizations. We also just awarded an additional \$2 million in Community Betterment grants to a total of over 200 of the 500+ organizations that applied for those grants.

Major issues facing PMRC at this time are contracts with the three horsemen's groups. We had reached an agreement with the thoroughbred group but the IRGC saw fit to ignore that agreement and imposed upon us their own racing schedule for 2010, something we hope to potentially be allowed to modify if we can reach agreement with all three horsemen's groups soon. The racing season issue should be resolved at the IRGC's meeting in late January.

Negotiations continue regarding the construction of a new hotel and parking ramp on the property. Financing is a concern due to the referendum vote in late 2010. With that hanging over us, long-term financing is not available to us until after the vote so construction timing may well be affected. Both we and the IRGC are anxious to get both structures up and operating as soon as possible. This issue should be solidified in the next few months.

Financially, the biggest issue facing us is the renewal of our lease with Polk County. We presently provide Polk County with approximately \$27 million annually and have given them a total in excess of \$475 million over the last 14 years. It appears PMRC will have its second best year in 2009 but the economy is proving to be a definite negative influence on our business. Although patron volume is actually up from 2008, revenues are down a few percentage points and the 2010 budget projects a further slight decline in 2010. The good news in this is that our revenues will be the highest of any casino in the state for 2009 and the decrease in our revenues is much less than our direct competition. Our emphasis on running a quality operation with one of the lowest holds of any casino in the state, coupled with a clean environment and a positive employee attitude, is something our patrons appreciate. Look for a further update on these and other issues next quarter.

## MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNMENT

The advantages of multi-level government are the following: (1) it ensures that government remains close to the people because the lowest levels of government argue that they are more in tune with the daily needs and aspirations of people especially relevant to small and isolated places. These smaller places must not be allowed to completely stymie actions needed for the majority. (2) It encourages development in a decentralized and regional manner and allows for unique and innovative methods for attacking social, economic and political problems. That successful innovation can then be copied by larger governments, if applicable. (3) It provides a barrier to the dominance of the majority; for the majority cannot be allowed override the rights (not privileges) of the minority.

The disadvantages are the following: (1) it can lead to duplication of government and inefficient, over-lapping or contradictory policies in different parts of the country. Maintaining “fiefdoms” may give a sense of ownership to the local population, but fragmented service delivery costs more in taxes. (2) It can lead to inequality between the area/regions and lead to unhealthy competition and rivalry between them. Cooperation at the local/regional level is needed as communications & travel have expanded our horizons and competitors.

I have cited both faces of multi-level government in order to inform all of you that this is a good system of government, yet we all are aware of problems, issues, and frictions. As the Association talks with local leaders this spring, the key is always to advocate for, and take advantage of the pluses, while minimizing the minuses. A difficult economic situation makes this even more important.

### RECESSION-HEALTH CONNECTION?

Our local governments (and our employers) have been focusing on wellness and prevention as a means of controlling the cost of government. One of the Association’s questions during Budget Review talks is, “What are you doing to control health care costs?” But some factors are beyond the employer’s control. One of those factors may be the state of the economy. The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index has charted the link between how we feel – the physical and emotional health, - and the state of the economy. There is some evidence that there may be a connection (well-beingindex.com). In West Virginia and Ohio, where job losses have been high and the economy is particularly weak, people report they are feeling worse than those in Utah (#1) and Wyoming, where the economy is stronger.

What about the Central States? Minnesota comes in at #5, Nebraska is #16, Kansas is at #22, **Iowa** ranks at **#27** (pretty good with Basic Access to healthcare, but not-so-good in our Life Evaluation), North Dakota is #28, Illinois comes in at #31, South Dakota is ranked at #39, and Missouri hits the chart at #44.

The website also has each state broken out by congressional District. How do we do in the Iowa’s 3<sup>rd</sup> District compared to the other 4 (and all 435 Congressional Districts)?

District	Rank	Best Indicator	Worst Indicator
<b>1st</b>	241	Basic Access	Life Evaluation
<b>2nd</b>	199	Physical Health	Healthy Behavior
<b>3rd</b>	175	Basic Access	Life Evaluation
<b>4th</b>	200	Emotional Health	Life Evaluation
<b>5th</b>	174	Physical Health	Healthy Behavior

## #1 Ranking is "Smartest"

# 2006-2007 Smartest State Award

ALPHA ORDER

RANK ORDER

<u>RANK</u>	<u>STATE</u>	<u>SMART RATING</u>	<u>2005-2006 RANK</u>	<u>CHANGE</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>STATE</u>	<u>SMART RATING</u>	<u>2005-2006 RANK</u>	<u>CHANGE</u>
45	Alabama	-11	43	-2	1	Vermont	18.57	1	0
46	Alaska	-11.91	44	-2	2	Massachusetts	16.09	3	1
50	Arizona	-17.61	50	0	3	Connecticut	14.46	2	-1
32	Arkansas	-3.44	37	5	4	New Jersey	14.35	4	0
47	California	-13.1	46	-1	5	Maine	10.79	5	0
27	Colorado	-1.32	23	-4	6	Virginia	10.07	7	1
3	Connecticut	14.46	2	-1	7	Montana	9.55	9	2
28	Delaware	-2.47	25	-3	8	Wisconsin	9.04	8	0
29	Florida	-2.9	36	7	9	Iowa	8.82	14	5
41	Georgia	-6.92	40	-1	10	Pennsylvania	8.69	11	1
42	Hawaii	-9.31	42	0	11	Nebraska	6.4	12	1
20	Idaho	1.29	28	8	12	New Hampshire	5.9	15	3
35	Illinois	-4.32	32	-3	13	Minnesota	5.33	6	-7
24	Indiana	0.06	26	2	14	Rhode Island	4.31	16	2
9	Iowa	8.82	14	5	15	Kansas	4.27	13	-2
15	Kansas	4.27	13	-2	16	New York	3.66	10	-6
31	Kentucky	-3.24	35	4	17	South Dakota	3.25	18	1
44	Louisiana	-10.95	45	1	18	Maryland	2.27	19	1
5	Maine	10.79	5	0	19	Wyoming	1.35	17	-2
18	Maryland	2.27	19	1	20	Idaho	1.29	28	8
2	Massachusetts	16.09	3	1	21	North Dakota	0.95	20	-1
39	Michigan	-6.43	27	-12	22	Missouri	0.94	21	-1
13	Minnesota	5.33	6	-7	23	North Carolina	0.84	22	-1
48	Mississippi	-14.78	49	1	24	Indiana	0.06	26	2
22	Missouri	0.94	21	-1	25	Texas	-0.11	24	-1
7	Montana	9.55	9	2	26	South Carolina	-1.19	29	3
11	Nebraska	6.4	12	1	27	Colorado	-1.32	23	-4
49	Nevada	-15.81	47	-2	28	Delaware	-2.47	25	-3
12	New Hampshire	5.9	15	3	29	Florida	-2.9	36	7
4	New Jersey	14.35	4	0	30	Tennessee	-3.01	41	11
43	New Mexico	-10.6	48	5	31	Kentucky	-3.24	35	4
16	New York	3.66	10	-6	32	Arkansas	-3.44	37	5
23	North Carolina	0.84	22	-1	33	Washington	-3.85	30	-3
21	North Dakota	0.95	20	-1	34	Ohio	-4	31	-3
34	Ohio	-4	31	-3	35	Illinois	-4.32	32	-3
36	Oklahoma	-5.81	39	3	36	Oklahoma	-5.81	39	3
40	Oregon	-6.87	38	-2	37	West Virginia	-5.82	34	-3
10	Pennsylvania	8.69	11	1	38	Utah	-6.3	33	-5
14	Rhode Island	4.31	16	2	39	Michigan	-6.43	27	-12
26	South Carolina	-1.19	29	3	40	Oregon	-6.87	38	-2
17	South Dakota	3.25	18	1	41	Georgia	-6.92	40	-1
30	Tennessee	-3.01	41	11	42	Hawaii	-9.31	42	0
25	Texas	-0.11	24	-1	43	New Mexico	-10.6	48	5
38	Utah	-6.3	33	-5	44	Louisiana	-10.95	45	1
1	Vermont	18.57	1	0	45	Alabama	-11	43	-2
6	Virginia	10.07	7	1	46	Alaska	-11.91	44	-2
33	Washington	-3.85	30	-3	47	California	-13.1	46	-1
37	West Virginia	-5.82	34	-3	48	Mississippi	-14.78	49	1
8	Wisconsin	9.04	8	0	49	Nevada	-15.81	47	-2
19	Wyoming	1.35	17	-2	50	Arizona	-17.61	50	0