## Majority Leader Report By Matt Windschitl

structure standpoint to

make buildings safe for

students and teachers. Along that same line, the bill prevents districts

from bonding to build

athletic stadiums or fa-

cilities unless and until

their facilities are up to

date with the school safe-

ty building standards from the task force. Safe-

ty and security should be

This bill also deals with how schools can

get help or send for help

Schools are allowed to

have a mobile panic alert

system if it can connect

to emergency services

and integrates with local

public safety answering

points. This is a mobile

phone application dis-

tricts can utilize. The

Governor's office previ-

ously developed a grant program for emergency

radios. Many schools

took advantage of that

grant, but some did not.

The Governor's office

has said that they plan to

re-open that grant pro-

gram to make sure all

schools can have access

to funding for the radi-

os. If schools do not take

advantage, they will be

required to use their own

two grant programs. The first is a three-mil-

lion-dollar Firearm De-

tection Software grant program run by the Iowa

Department of Home-

land Security and Emer-

gency Management. The

grant program provides

funds to school districts

of varying sizes to help

offset the cost associated

with purchasing, install-

ing, operating software

that meets these require-

detect district employees

\*Designed to alert and

This bill establishes

funds.

ments:

an emergency arises.

the priority.

Second Funnel Week

The legislative session is grinding on as we approach the end of week 10 which is also our second funnel week, a self-imposed deadline between the chambers to have bills out of committee in order to remain eligible for further consideration this session.

So far this session, House Republicans have passed roughly 175 bills and sent them to the Senate for consideration. In comparison, the Senate has passed around 60 bills for consideration in the House. This contrast may seem stark, and people may ask why a disparity is there. The simplest explanation is that House Republicans have a 64-member majority, and each one of those members have listened to their constituents and brought forth proposals based on that feedback. We have worked tirelessly to get those proposals enacted into law. The House chamber has had thoughtful and thorough debate on each of those pieces of legislation. We're proud to work hard for our constituents every year in the Iowa House, even if it means long hours and late nights, and this session is no different.

Protecting Our Students
One of the main themes House Republicans have been working on this session is school safety and security for our students and staff in educational settings. We have brought forth numerous proposals surrounding this topic and will continue working on multiple ways to accom-

plish this goal. One of the bills we have advanced to the Senate for consideration allows schools flexibility to protect students by arming staff. For a staff member to qualify for this responsibility, they must undergo specific training regarding active shooters and emergency response strategy, and they must obtain a professional permit to carry that requires elevated firearm training. training laid out in the bill is extensive and rigorous. Keep in mind this would be on a voluntary basis for schools and staff to choose if they want to use this option. No one will be forced to undergo training if they do not want to have the responsibility, and no school is

Another proposal we have put forth deals with school infrastructure and creates grants for schools to utilize technology to equip schools and detect bad actors with harmful intentions. This bill creates a task force to develop school safety building codes to deter-mine what makes school buildings safer. Currently none exist. With new standards, school officials will be able to make sure they are doing what they can from an infraand first responders if there is a visible, unholstered firearm on a property owned by the school district.

\*Designed to integrate with a district's existing security camera infrastructure.

\*Was developed in the U.S. without any of third-party data or opensource data.

The second grant program is the School Security Personnel Grants for Infrastructure, Equipment, and Training. This grant program states that if the bill is passed, it will provide school districts

grants to purchase infrastructure and equipment related to employee permits to carry weapons, facilitate the training associated with employee permits to carry weapons, and to provide stipends to employees who participate in the training associated with employee permits to carry weapons. Districts who choose to enhance school security this way will have additional expenses and House Republicans want to help cover those costs to truly make schools a safer place for students and staff.

## Private Well Stewardship Program Helps Iowans Safeguard Drinking Water

Owners of private wells can be connected to local experts and funding to test their well by attending one of several workshops being held across the state.

The Private Well Stewardship Program, an educational program offered by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, teaches well owners about the responsibilities and risks of being a private well owner and connects them to additional resources to manage their well.

"Iowa is very lucky in that we have a statewide program that can cover the cost of annual well water quality testing, shock chlorination, and well assessments, but many counties are leaving money on the table and not taking advantage of this opportunity," said Catherine DeLong, water quality program manager and leader of the program.

Over a dozen workshops are planned in towns across Iowa

through May. Events are planned in Clinton, Scott, Jones, Washington, Cerro Gordo, Webster, Jackson, Allamakee, Ringgold, Johnson, Linn, Wright and Warren counties. Location details can be found on the program website.

The one-hour session is free and explains the responsibilities of being a private well owner, how to test your well water quality and who can help, common contaminants found in Iowa and factors that can affect well water quality.

well water quality.
About 7% of Iowans, or 230,000 individuals, rely on private wells as their home's main water source. Annual testing of well water is recommended by ISU Extension and Outreach, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Yet, only 5-10% of Iowa households with private wells test their water quality annually.

Why should you test your well annually? Here are a few reasons why testing well water is important. It all boils down to knowing what you are drinking:

\*Testing your water annually will help keep you, your family, pets, livestock and others safe. Some pollutants are odorless and tasteless and will not be removed by boiling water.

by boiling water.

\*Pollutants like bacteria, arsenic and nitrate are found at elevated levels in 10-30% of private wells in Iowa.

\*Iowa has a unique program that allows for free or low-cost annual testing of private wells.

If your county is not on this list, you can contact your ISU Extension and Outreach county office and ask if they are offering the Private Well Stewardship Program in your area. Or, you can contact Catherine DeLong at crdelong@iastate.edu or 515-294-5963.

a little lost. You then need

to set your own routine.

Every morning, get right

out of bed, take a shower

ing the loss of your job

and adjusting to unem-

ployment can take time.

Learning to manage your

experiences and feelings

don't overdo it. It is easy

to look at career websites

\*Apply for jobs, but

is a continual process.

\*Give it time. Griev-

and get dressed.

## What to Expect after Sudden Job Loss

For some people, a sudden job loss might be a welcome relief from a difficult situation or may offer the time to reflect on their career and what they really want. But for most, a job loss can have a significant emotional impact, says David Brown, behavioral health state specialist with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

"Losing a job due to a plant closure or some other sudden layoff can be overwhelming and stressful," Brown stated and offered the following suggestions that may help individuals to cope positively with stress and loss.

\*Find social support. Social support plays a critical role in helping people manage adversity. Such support from mentors, family and friends is critical because anxiety and depression can sometimes accompany job loss

my job loss.

\*Take care of your needs. Keep a regular sleep schedule and eat nutritious meals and snacks. Exercise is also an important remedy for stress.

\*Take a break. Turn this into an opportunity to get away and visit friends or family. \*Maintain a routine.

With unstructured time,

you may feel like you are

or job boards and apply for everything. But, when applying for jobs, choose quality over quantity. Many community mental health centers or nonprofit mental health

mental health centers or nonprofit mental health providers offer a sliding pay scale or financial assistance on the basis of your ability to pay. You can find local mental health professionals by going to www.iowamhdsregions.org/," Brown said.

Consider calling the Iowa Concern Hotline. This resource from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach offers confidential assistance and referral for stress, legal questions and financial concerns. Iowa Concern can be contacted toll-free at 1-800-447-1985 or at https://www. extension.iastate.edu/ iowaconcern/. Interpretation services are available.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notices Protect Your Right To Know

	NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING -PROPOSED PROPERTY TAX LEVY Proposed WHITING Property Tax Levy Fiscal Year July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025	
Location of Public Hearing: Board Room - 1st Floor	Date of Public Hearing: 4/1/2024	Time of Public Hearing: 07:00 PM
Location of Notice on School Website: https://www.whitingcsd.org/school-board		

At the public hearing any resident or taxpayer may present oral or written objections to, or arguments in favor of the proposed tax levy. After the hearing of the proposed tax levy, the Board will publish notice and hold a hearing on the proposed budget.

and Board will publish notice and note a neuring on the proposed outget					
		Current Year Final Property Tax Dollar Levy FY 2024	Budget Year Effective Property Tax Dollar Levy (No change in Property Tax Dollars Levied) FY 2025	Budget Year Proposed Property Tax Dollar Levy FY 2025	
General Fund Levy	1	1,106,279	1,106,279	1,407,568	
Instructional Support Levy	2	68,492	68,492	67,120	
Management	3	347,718	347,718	135,166	
Amana Library	4	0	0	0	
Voted Physical Plant and Equipment	5	98,130	98,130	103,839	
Regular Physical Plant and Equipment	6	48,333	48,333	51,145	
Reorganization Equalization	7	0	0	0	
Public Education/Recreation (Playground)	8	0	0	0	
Debt Service	9	0	0	0	
Grand Total	10	1,668,952	1,668,952	1,764,838	
		Current Year Final Property Tax Rate FY 2024	Budget Year Effective Property Tax Rate (No change in Property Tax Dollars Levied) FY 2025	Budget Year Proposed Property Tax Rate FY 2025	
Grand Total Levy Rate		11.39503	10.76853	11.38723	
Property Tax Comparison		Current Year Property Taxes	Proposed Property Taxes	Percent Change	
Residential property with an Actual/Assessed Value of \$100,000		623	528	-15.25	
Commercial property with an Actual/Assessed Value of \$100,000		623	528	-15.25	

Note: Actual/Assessed Valuation is multiplied by a Rollback Percentage to get to the Taxable Valuation to calculate Property Taxes. Residential and Commercial properties have the same Rollback Percentage at \$100,000 Actual/Assessed Valuation.

Reasons for tax increase if proposed exceeds the current:

The district's cash reserve levy was increased to offset the cost of special education costs not funded by the state.