

FEDERAL UPDATE

House Speaker John Boehner to Resign

House Speaker John Boehner will resign his post and leave Congress at the end of October. Boehner had planned to retire last year, but his plan changed after the unexpected Republican primary loss of former House Majority Leader Eric Cantor. Boehner announced the decision during a House Republican caucus, in which Republicans discussed a strategy going forward with a government shutdown looming at the end of September.

Success of Renewable Energy Could Mean End of Subsidies

The Washington Examiner reported wind and solar energy “have become cost-competitive without subsidies, according to Obama administration officials and outside experts.” Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz told reporters that “the price of solar has fallen so dramatically that the market can now grow without subsidies.” The Energy Secretary believes the cost of rooftop solar could soon be as low as six cents per kilowatt hour, making it competitive with other energy sources.

WAPA Streamlining Wind Energy Permits for Midwest States

The Western Area Power Administration plans to streamline its review process for proposed wind energy projects in Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota that would connect to WAPA’s transmission system.

NRC Commissioners Divided on Yucca Mountain Question

The NRC appears split along party lines regarding the decision to seek additional funds for the agency to continue its review of the Energy Department’s application to build the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository. Democrats will not seek additional funds if the Energy Department is not in full agreement, while Republican commissioners indicated a support for additional funds and continued review of the project.

Resolution Introduced in the U.S. House to Impeach EPA Administrator

Members of the U.S. House of Representatives have co-sponsored articles of impeachment against EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy. McCarthy is accused in the resolution “of perjury and making false statements before the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology.”

Obama, Xi Reach Agreement on Climate Change

President Obama and Chinese President Xi Jinping met to discuss a wide range of issues. The two agreed upon steps to combat climate change. China vowed to initiate a program by 2017 that aims to limit some emissions, place a price on carbon, and contribute \$3.1 billion to help poorer countries finance similar efforts.

STATE UPDATE

Employer Unemployment Insurance Taxes Increase in 2016

Iowa law requires Iowa Workforce Development to establish the tax table that will be used to determine the unemployment tax rate for eligible employers each year. The unemployment insurance rate table trigger formula is primarily based on the trust fund balance, unemployment benefit payment history and covered wage growth. The formula is designed to enable the trust fund to keep pace with potential liabilities as covered employment and wages grow. Based on this formula, the contribution rate table will move from Table 7 in 2015 to Table 6 in 2016. This will cause the estimated average contribution rate for employers to increase from 1.24 percent to 1.57 percent.

MidAmerican Chooses O'Brien and Ida Grove Counties for Wind Projects

Ida and O'Brien counties in northwest Iowa will be home to two new MidAmerican Energy Co. wind farms. Construction will begin in the spring and of 2016 will add 552 MWS of wind generation capacity. The project is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2016. Plans call for approximately 134 turbines and up to 301 MWS of generation capacity at the new Ida Grove wind farm and 104 turbines and 250 MWS of generation capacity at the new O'Brien wind farm. With the addition of the Ida Grove and O'Brien wind farms, MidAmerican Energy will operate wind farms in 23 Iowa counties. By the end of 2016, MidAmerican Energy's wind assets in Iowa will include more than 2,000 turbines.

Chinese Delegation Signed Contracts for Iowa Soybeans and Health Products

A Chinese commercial delegation visited Iowa and signed contracts to buy soybeans and health products. Governor Terry Branstad met with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Chinese governors from the provinces of Sichuan, Chongqing, Zhejiang, Shandong and Shaanxi in Seattle. Last year, the United States shipped \$24 billion worth of agricultural products to China, \$14 billion of which were soy products.

Moody's Affirms Alliant Energy Ratings, Lowers Outlook

Moody's Investors Service recently affirmed its ratings for bonds of Alliant Energy and its utility subsidiaries, but changed their outlooks to negative citing concerns over how increased capital spending to meet environmental standards will affect debt coverage.

Johnson County Gives Final Approval to Minimum Wage Increase

The Johnson County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously for the third and final time in favor of an ordinance that will raise the county's minimum wage. Per the ordinance, the minimum wage in Johnson County will increase from \$7.25 an hour to \$10.10 an hour by 2017 in three 95-cent increments, and future raises will be tied to annual increases in the Consumer Price Index. The first increase, to \$8.20, will take effect Nov. 1.

Upcoming Activities in 2015

IAEC Managers Fall Conference – West Des Moines, IA	October 7 – 8, 2015
IADG Team Edge Fall Meeting, Des Moines, IA	October 14, 2015
CIPCO Board Meeting – Des Moines, IA	October 27, 2015