Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds unveils Iowa Energy Plan

After a year of planning, hard work and collaboration with stakeholders from around the state – including working group members, state agencies, industry organizations, and members of the public – the Iowa Energy Plan was unveiled today beginning with a formal gathering in the Rotunda at the Iowa Capitol. A press release accompanied the online publication of the executive summary and the full Iowa Energy Plan. Other related documents, and information about the entire process, may be viewed at iowaenergyplan.org. The Iowa Energy Plan will allow the state to set priorities and provide strategic guidance for decision-making around energy policy initiatives. The plan's tagline reads, “Collaborate locally. Grow sustainably. Lead nationally.”

Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds, chair of the Iowa Energy Plan initiative, stood at a podium first to announce the release the Iowa Energy Plan and to discuss its key focus areas and a general overview of its recommendations. Reynolds stated the plan “articulated a clear vision for our future,” emphasizing it was “Iowa’s energy plan” – and not a plan of individual agencies or organizations. She reminded Iowans that because “Iowa is in a unique position as a leader in wind energy and biofuels,” the state has “some of the lowest cost energy in the U.S.”

Reynolds responded to a question about whether or not the Energy Plan contained specific legislative proposals by saying, “No” and that they (all who were involved in developing the plan) “didn’t want this [plan] to be a mandate.” She said the plan “really is more of a beginning and where the true work begins,” and that the plan’s outlined strategies will be used as a basis for further strategic work with stakeholder implementation groups next year to keep the momentum moving forward. Reynolds indicated that if there are any polices that come forward as a result of the ongoing stakeholder work, then they’d “look forward to working with legislators to implement” certain policies.

Next, Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) Director Debi Durham made brief remarks at the podium and reiterated the plan takes into account the foundational understanding that “Iowans enjoy lower energy costs and abundant renewable energy.”

Mark Lowe, interim director of the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT), said, “It’s critical to establish a vision for what a modernized grid should look like for Iowa.” He also said, “We want to build out a charging infrastructure for electric vehicles.”

All three speakers thanked the many state agencies, organizations, specific individuals – including Energy Team Leader Brian Selinger – and other Iowans who participated in the planning and developing of the Energy Plan.
The Iowa Energy Plan will serve as the foundation to guide collaborators’ work together to maximize and realize Iowa’s economic potential, building on the past energy successes and laying the groundwork necessary to reaffirm Iowa’s energy leadership into the future.

With the Iowa Energy Plan now made public, IUA President Mark Douglas makes the following brief statement:

“The industry now has the opportunity to review the new Iowa Energy Plan. When our review of the Plan is complete, we will be working with other stakeholders to promote those sound plan initiatives that further advance Iowa’s energy leadership and will benefit our customers.”

INDUSTRY NEWS

Iowa Utilities Board sets forth three legislative initiatives for 2017

IUB Legislative Liaison Lewis VanderStreek provided an overview of the agency’s legislative agenda at the Board’s monthly public meeting yesterday. He outlined three initiatives he said have been sent to the Legislative Service Bureau for drafting. Those issues as follows:

- IUB will be pursuing an exemption to Iowa’s public information (open records) law for utility filings and information related to utility cybersecurity. If adopted, the Board would be in a position to accept information related to company cybersecurity efforts and issues, and it would not have to release that information to the public.
- The IUB will be asking to remove the option of a prior Board approval (hearing) process for companies seeking temporary rates. Since this method of temporary rates approval has not been utilized, the Board instead wants to leave in place only the option that utilities can implement temporary rates with the possibility of later ordering refunds if those rates are not ultimately approved.
- The IUB also will be seeking a change in the designation of who is to preside at public meetings for transmission projects. VanderStreek indicated that change would be from a “Hearing Examiner” to a “Presiding Officer.”

Institute for Electric Innovation releases new book on trends driving change in the electric power industry

The Edison Foundation Institute for Electric Innovation (IEI), this week released a new book, Thought Leaders Speak Out: Key Trends Driving Change in the Electric Power Industry, Volume III. The book examines how rate and regulatory reform, data analytics, and energy grid modernization are key drivers of change for the industry. It features 20 essays by electric and technology company thought leaders that focus on three key trends driving the transformation underway in the electric power industry: Rate and Regulatory Reform, Data Analytics and Grid Modernization.

Volume I in the series was published by IEI in December 2015, and Volume II was published by IEI in June 2016.

The institute “focuses on advancing the adoption and application of new technologies that will strengthen and transform the power grid” and consists of members from the investor-owned electric utilities that represent about 70 percent of the US electric power industry.
MidAmerican Energy completes construction on new transmission line in northwest Iowa

MidAmerican Energy Company issued a news release last week with the announcement that construction is now complete on a new high-voltage transmission line that travels through portions of six northwest Iowa counties: Clay, Humboldt, Kossuth, O’Brien, Palo Alto and Webster. MidAmerican Energy, which built the line, stated “The main reason for the new infrastructure is to build a smarter and more reliable energy grid.”

From the release:

“The 345-kilovolt transmission line, known as Multi-Value Project 3, spans approximately 120 miles in northwest Iowa from a location near Sanborn to Burt and then ending near Fort Dodge. In addition to the new line, the company constructed two new substations, modified an existing substation and rebuilt existing 161-kilovolt transmission lines along the same route. Construction crews replaced two- and three-pole wood structures with single-pole steel structures, which means fewer power poles per mile, less need for maintenance, and more land available for farming.”

“By updating the energy grid, we can better serve our customers,” said Steve Ambrose, project manager, high-voltage transmission, for MidAmerican Energy. “Over the years the population and energy needs have grown and so have our needs for reliability. Bigger houses, more technology and more appliances have led to increases in energy use. By building new transmission lines, we can meet these demands and provide more reliable service to customers. A smarter energy grid will also carry and deliver more wind energy through Iowa and, ultimately, to our customers.”

Ambrose also emphasized the transmission line will result in the creation of economic benefits for local communities, “including the use of locally made goods and services to build the project, landowner easement payments, and an increase in annual property tax payments to local counties.”

The company’s “Transmission Expansion Plan,” of which Multi-Value Project 3 is a part, was unanimously approved in 2011 by the Midcontinent Independent Transmission System Operator, Inc. (MISO). For more information, view MidAmerican Energy’s Multi-Value Project Brochure.

UPCOMING INDUSTRY MEETINGS

**Wednesday, January 11**
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.  
Iowa AOP Study | Monthly Check-In Meeting with Dunsky

**Webinar:** By invite only

Oversight Committee members for the Iowa Energy Efficiency Assessment of Energy Efficiency Potential project will join the project consultant, Dunsky Energy Consulting, for its monthly “check-in” meeting. The webinar will include an update and discussion on the work plan, schedule, mail surveys, data requests, additional demonstration of the Potential model and its key features, and “next steps” for the study.

**Wednesday, January 11**
10:00 a.m. – noon  
Iowa DNR | Major Source Construction Permit Application Fee Advisory Group & Title V Fees Advisory Group

**Iowa DNR Air Quality Bureau Offices:** 7900 Hickman Rd., Suite 1, Windsor Heights, IA 50324

Agenda forthcoming (will be posted to Fee Advisory Group webpage). Fee advisory groups will meet to review and provide comment on the draft Air Quality Bureau budget for the next state fiscal year. Iowa DNR notes that “No changes are anticipated to be made for any of the following: asbestos notification fee, minor source construction permit application fee, major source construction permit application fee, or Title V application fees. The Title V emission fee draft budget anticipates an increase from $67.50 to $70 per ton.”
**Wednesday, January 11**
3:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.  
**Iowa ABI | Legislative Briefing and Reception**

**Embassy Suites Des Moines Downtown:** 101 E. Locust Street, Des Moines, IA 50309

**View agenda & register for event.** The annual Iowa Association of Business & Industry (ABI) Legislative Reception is one of the best attended events of the legislative session. Legislators from all corners of the state attend to network with their constituents about the most pressing issues facing business and industry.

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**Tuesday, January 17**
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.  
**IUB | Monthly Public Meeting**

**IUB/OCA Building, Hearing Room:** 1375 E. Court Ave., Des Moines, IA 50319

**Agenda forthcoming.** The Board will hold its next public meeting to discuss agency issues and to help inform the public and utility industry stakeholders about various dockets and functions of the Board. The meeting will be live-streamed.

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**Wednesday, January 18**
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
**IUA | Iowa Utility Lobbyists & IBEW – Annual Legislative Luncheon**

**Cub Club, Principal Park:** 1 Line Dr, Des Moines, IA 50309

**Agenda forthcoming.** The IUA will host Iowa's energy utility industry lobbyists and legislative groups from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) in Iowa for an annual legislative luncheon. Attendees will share thoughts about likely energy issues to be addressed during the 2017 Session, and utilities and IBEW legislative groups will outline what issues they will be pursuing.

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