
FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

September 24, 2025



Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

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TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING — SEPTEMBER 2025

The Transportation Commission (Commission) met for an informal workshop on September 9, 2025, in Ames. The Commission discussed the following topics:

- **Commission Input.** Commission Chair Ray Gaesser commented on the recent Department of Transportation (DOT) [Iowa Strategic Highway Safety Plan](#) detailing new actions that the Department has taken regarding safety on Iowa roads.
- **Director's Welcome.** Iowa DOT Director Scott Marler gave comments about DOT enforcement of Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) laws and federal requirements for issuing CMV licenses. Director Marler also noted that Systems Operation Division head Dave Lorenzen has retired, and the new head of the Division is Wes Musgrove. Director Marler also discussed DOT actions related to road safety. Director Marler gave an update on a meeting between DOT representatives called "Mid-American State of Transportation" where all attending states signed a joint resolution to implement safety technology, such as new signs, lights, and alert systems, on roads within the states. Director Marler also noted that the current year-to-date fatality total from traffic accidents is 138, which is 31 fewer fatalities than September 2024 and 44 fewer fatalities than the five-year average.
- **Administrative Rules.** The Commission received an overview of the following six administrative rule chapters that will be rescinded and readopted per Executive Order 10:
 - 761 Iowa Administrative Code (IAC) [425](#), Motor Vehicle and Towable Recreational Vehicle Dealer Manufacturers, Distributors and Wholesalers.
 - 761 IAC [500](#), Interstate Registration and Operation of Vehicles.
 - 761 IAC [601](#), Application for License.
 - 761 IAC [605](#), License Issuance.
 - 761 IAC [625](#), Driver's License for Undercover Law Enforcement.
 - 761 IAC [630](#), Nonoperator's Identification.
- **Washington, D.C., Trip.** The Commission will travel to Washington, D.C., from September 15 to September 17. The Commission plans to meet with Congressional delegations, U.S. DOT officials, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to discuss federal transportation support and funds.
- **Transportation Trends Update.** The DOT provided the following updates:
 - Railcar load statistics are provided on a quarterly basis. U.S. railcar loads in the second quarter of calendar year 2025 increased by 0.7% compared to the same quarter in the previous year.
 - Monthly commercial service airport passenger counts in July 2025 increased by 2.0% compared to July 2024.
 - Monthly State vehicle miles of travel for July 2025 increased by 0.2% compared to July 2024.
 - Statewide fatalities have decreased 23.0% when compared to the five-year average and major injuries have decreased 8.5% when compared to the five-year average.
 - The Mississippi River water levels are expected to be lower in the next few weeks due to a decrease in rain.
- **2026 Highway Program Balance Report.** The Commission received an update on the FY 2026 Highway Program balance. The Program balance in August 2025 was \$11.9 million. This is a decrease of \$10.3 million compared to July 2025.
- **October Commission Tour Review.** The Commission will be going on a tour in October in eastern Iowa. The tour will begin at the Hampton Inn in Clinton, then head west along U.S. 30 to look at bridge deck overlays and U.S. 61 paving and bridge rehab at the 210th street interchange. The tour will then visit Lock and Dam 14 in LeClaire before returning to Clinton.

- **Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2025 Transit Program.** The FFY 2025 Transit Program provides funding to states and transit agencies through a statutory formula to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses and related equipment and to construct bus-related facilities. Funding totaling \$8.7 million is available that will allow 16 public transit systems to be able to purchase 40 vehicles.
- **Revitalize Iowa's Sound Economy (RISE) Program.** The Commission was informed of an immediate opportunity and three local development recommendations. Currently there is \$16.3 million available from the city RISE Fund and \$489,000 available from the county RISE Fund.
 - **RISE Fund project for Perry.** The immediate opportunity/local development hybrid project will consist of reconstruction of 2,700 feet of Soumas Avenue located on the southeast side of Perry. The recommended RISE Fund grant amount is approximately \$2.8 million, or 80.0% of the total project cost.
 - **RISE Fund project for Perry.** The immediate opportunity/local development hybrid project will consist of construction of turn lanes and a traffic signal at the intersection of Iowa 141 and Soumas Avenue located on the southeast side of Perry. The recommended RISE Fund grant amount is approximately \$1.9 million, or 60.0% of the total project cost.
 - **RISE Fund project for Altoona.** The local development project will consist of widening 975 feet of 20th Avenue NW and the Interstate 80 ramp; construction of 1,375 feet of 20th Avenue NW and 2,960 feet of 33rd Street NW; paving of 2,620 feet of 42nd Street; intersection improvements at 20th Avenue NW and 25th Street NW and also 20th Avenue NW and Hubbell Avenue; and a turn lane at 34th Avenue NW and 42nd Street NW located on the northwest side of Altoona. The recommended RISE Fund grant amount is approximately \$6.0 million, or 50.0% of the total project cost.
 - **RISE Fund project for Spencer.** The local development project will consist of construction of approximately 865 feet of 4th Avenue West located on the north side of Spencer and approximately 955 feet of 37th Avenue West located on the west side of Spencer. The recommended RISE Fund grant amount is approximately \$833,000, or 70.0% of the total project cost.
 - **RISE Fund project for Woodbury County.** The local development project will consist of construction of a new interchange on Interstate 29 located south of Sioux City. The recommended RISE Fund grant amount is approximately \$4.8 million, or 21.0% of the total project cost.
- **Railroad Revolving Loan and Grant Program (RRLG).** The RRLG program previously was the Iowa Railway Finance Authority (IRFA). The IRFA was created in 1980 in response to gaps in rail service caused by rail line abandonments. The RRLG program was created in 2005 by an amendment to the Iowa Code and follows administrative rules set by the DOT. Currently there is \$3.3 million in both grants and loans available for the RRLG program. The Commission received five applications, but only four are recommended for funding. The recommended funding projects are as follows:
 - **Floyd Valley Transload, 1321 Lewis Blvd.,** sponsored by Floyd Valley Transload. The recommended loan is \$830,000, or 55.3% of the total project cost.
 - **Floyd Valley Transload, Rustin Street Spur Addition,** sponsored by Floyd Valley Transload. The recommended loan is \$256,000, or 80.0% of the total project cost.
 - **Burlington Junction Railway (BJRY) Le Mars Transload Expansion,** sponsored by BJRY. The recommended loan is \$792,000, or 70.0% of the total project cost.
 - **Black Hawk — New Box Manufacturing Facility,** sponsored by International Paper. The recommended grant is \$1.5 million, or 0.5% of the total project cost.
- **FY 2027 Highway-Railroad Crossing Safety Program.** The Highway-Railroad Crossing Safety Program is a federally funded program for states to improve warning devices at railroad crossings. Currently there is \$6.5 million in available funding for the Program. There are 16 applications that are recommended for funding. The full list of recommendations can be found on the DOT [website](#).
- **FY 2027 Highway-Railroad Crossing Surface Repair Program.** The Highway-Railroad Crossing Surface Repair Program incentivizes railroads and roadway authorities to participate in the cooperative repair of crossing surfaces. Currently there is \$6.5 million available in funding for the Program. There are 12 applications that are recommended for funding. The full list of recommendations can be found on the DOT [website](#).

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- **Highway System Overview.** The Commission received an overview of the State's highway system consisting of Iowa's public roadway system, highway networks, State highway system usage, and highway planning and programming.

The Commission held a business meeting on September 9, 2025, in Ames. The Commission took the following actions:

- **Approved Minutes.** The Commission approved the minutes from the last meeting on August 11, 2025.
- **Administrative Rules Overview.** The Commission approved the readoption of the six administrative rule chapters.
- **FFY 2025 Transit Program.** The Commission approved the recommendations for the FFY 2025 Transit Program.
- **RISE Program.** The Commission approved the recommendations for the RISE Program.

Next Meeting. The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for October 13 and 14, 2025, in Clinton.

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