ICBV Office Update

March 7, 2017

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**\*\*1** **Calendar of Events**

**April 18-21. 2016**

**NAMA and NFBEI/RSA Training in Vegas**

From Terry Smith, NFBEI - Mark your calendars now! The NFBEI and the RSA Management Group will be conducting a half-day training for Randolph-Sheppard stakeholders in conjunction with the NAMA One Show in Las Vegas April 18-21. The One Show is an amazing 3-day event that includes educational seminars, high profile keynote speakers, and the largest exhibit hall in the industry with literally hundreds of companies showing cutting edge equipment and new vend products. The RSA training will be from noon to 5:00 PM on Tuesday, April 18th.

See the following RSA agenda for their training session on Tuesday April 18, 2017 from 2-5 pm the day before the NAMA show in Vegas starts. Exact location to follow.

Topics will include:

Tips on how to increase your rebates

Latest vending technology

Showcase of new vending equipment available

Showcase of new micro market equipment and technology

Additional NAMA info:

Former First Lady Laura Bush To Keynote NAMA's OneShow 2017

**April 22, 2017 Saturday**

The Illinois Association of Blind Students, the student chapter of the NFB of Illinois, presents a **2017 Student Spring Seminar:** BEATING the BARRIERS

WHERE? Holiday Inn Midway: 6624 S. Cicero Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. To reserve your hotel room, call 708-563-6490. Tell the hotel you are booking with the National Federation of the Blind of Illinois for the special rate of $129 per night (plus tax).

HOW MUCH? The Seminar costs only $15 per person. Financial assistance may be available for attendees outside Chicagoland through the NFBI Chappell-Dennis Memorial fund. Please apply by April 1,2017.

HOW TO REGISTER and/or apply for financial assistance: Please register at the National Federation of the Blind of Illinois web site. Follow the links to Spring seminar.

WHY WAIT? Registration ends April 14, 2017.

Special requests and questions should be directed to Emma Meyer at: MeyerEmma13@gmail.com . Sign up to our free listservs (IL-Talk and IABS-Talk) at nfb.org/listserv for updates and info (or to post questions or comments).

SAVE THE DATE:

**May 4 – 6 2016**

**BEPB/ICBV Spring Election Committee Meetings**

Abe Lincoln Hotel, Springfield IL

More info to follow soon.

SAVE THE DATE:

**September 12-15, 2017**

**NABM BLAST 2017**

Nashville Airport Marriott Hotel

Tradeshow September 13th

Mark Your Calendars Now!!!!

Visit [www.blindmerchants.org](http://www.blindmerchants.org) for more information as it becomes available. For more information, contact Nicky Gacos at nickycolorado@netscape.net or call him at (908) 464-5359 or contact Terry Smith at terrysmith@epbfi.com or 865-599-7148.

**July 17-28 2017**

The National Federation of the Blind is excited to offer its **Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning Program,** BELL, this summer in Illinois. This is a great opportunity for Braille skills to be addressed in a fun and new environment.

Where: The Chicago Lighthouse 1850 W. Roosevelt Rd. Chicago, Il 60608

When: Monday- Friday, July 17-28 2017

Times: 8:30-3:30

Cost: $50

We will explore and learn new braille and blindness skills. As a group, field trips will be taken twice a week to utilize and improve mobility skills. Apply NOW at: <https://nfb.org/bell-academy>

**July 31- August 4, 2017**

The National Federation of the Blind is excited to offer its **Braille Enrichment for Literacy and Learning Program**, BELL, this summer in Illinois. This opportunity will be a weeklong residential program on Illinois State University’s campus.

Where: Springfield, IL

Who: Blind child/Parent pairs

Cost: $50

The children will explore and learn new braille and blindness skills.

A Parent session will run parallel with the student portion. Information on allowing for independence, community resources and child advocacy and much more will be covered. Apply NOW at: <https://nfb.org/bell-academy>

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**\*\*2** From Blind Perspective

International Perspective

By Paul Mugambi, Kenya

karen@theblindperspective.com

**A bit about Kenya**:

Kenya is located in East Africa on the equator. It shares boarders with Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Tanzania, and Uganda. It also has 250 miles of coastline on the Indian Ocean. Kenya is named after Mount Kenya, the tallest mountain in the country. Kenya is a developing country, although more than half of its population lives in poverty. The Capital, and largest city is Nairobi. The two official languages of Kenya are English and Swahili, although a variety of languages are spoken in various other parts of the country. Kenya features many wildlife reserves, making safaris a popular attraction for tourists.

Schools for the Blind:

Kenya has several schools for people with disabilities, including many specialized schools for those who are blind or have low vision. These primary and secondary schools are residential. These are government schools, managed by Boards of Governors.

Fee payments are very poor. Local communities support the schools with gifts of food. Individual sponsorships are taking into consideration, based on visual impairment. Many children at these schools are older because of delays in commencing school. Such reasons could be due to hospitalization or if eye problems occurred later in their childhood.

The Thika School for the Blind which consist of a primary and secondary school, has a student enrollment of around 250. The school offers all the courses needed in order for the students to gain independence. Many of these students excel in sports and music. Some students have gone on to compete in Para-olympics. All the teachers and staff are professionally trained to deliver their duties with ethics and they have unconditional love for children.

Thika High School is one of a few High Schools for blind children in East and Central Africa. The school follows the standard High School curriculum leading to the Kenya Certificate in Secondary Education. Some of the schools also have large computer libraries which are accessible to all the students. Some schools consist of students from very poor families and others students have been abandoned due to their disability. Such schools depend upon well-wishers, including Ministry of Education for support. Even with these challenges, the school’s focuses on producing competent and independent individuals. Students with low vision would be more apt to enter into a “regular” school since there is no accommodations made for blind students.

Braille & mobility:

Braille is taught within these schools for the blind. Study books and examinations are transcribed into Braille.

Typically, students who enter the schools for the blind have not had any previous experience with a white cane. They are given their first cane upon entering school. However, there is no formal training in the use of the cane. Students learn mobility skills mainly from other older, more experienced students, or on their own.

University:

Blind students do attend Universities, although the number is not very high. Blind students do receive some assistance with their materials. However, they pay for college the same way as their sighted peers; scholarships, financial aid, loans, etc.

Sports Associations:

Kenya Paralympic Sports: is an organization that runs sports for persons with physical and visual disabilities. They participate in a variety of sports both recreationally and competitively.

Kenya Sport Association for the Visually Impaired: plans and manages games and sports for persons with visual impairments in the country. Some sports that blind and visually impaired people participate in include judo, goalball, swimming, soccer, 5 ring ball, and bowling.

Job Training:

Some of the schools for the blind offer vocational courses. They include sewing and knitting for the ladies and leather craft and shoe making for the men. Other than this, there are no other job training programs.

Accessibility

Transportation:

There is no separate form of transportation for people with disabilities. Blind/visually impaired people ride the city bus and taxis just like sighted people, and with no reduced fare.

Getting around:

Navigating the streets in Kenya are not blind friendly. There are no curb cuts or tactile strips at intersections. Nor are there any pedestrian audible signals or braille at intersections. The best way to get around is with the white cane and asking others for assistance.

Braille:

Other than on a few elevators, there is no braille in the public. Documents from various businesses are not provided in braille format.

Guide Dogs:

There are no guide dog schools or guide dogs used in Kenya.

Benefits:

Blind individuals receive a white cane and a tax exemption. In order to receive any governmental assistance an individual must be severely disabled, and blindness does not qualify.

Blind Organizations:

\*National Council for Persons with Disabilities: To promote and protect equalization of opportunities and realization of human rights for people with disabilities to live decent lives.

\*Society of Professionals with Visual Disabilities (SOPVID): a society that brings together blind professionals in order to find solutions on technological issues and hold discussions on matters specific to their professions and how best technology can be used to enhance their experiences.

\*Kenya Society for the Blind: To enhance the prevention of blindness, increase access to services and equalization of opportunities for visually impaired persons, through: enabling programs, capacity building, networking, partnership and influencing change.

Some of the programs they have include; education, rehabilitation, awareness, eye care, and advocacy.

\*Kenya Institute for the Blind (K.I.B) was registered as a National Braille Resource Centre for the Blind Persons by the Ministry of Education Science and Technology in February 2004. K.I.B strives to assist the Government of Kenya to fulfill the National Objectives such as Education for All in all activities.

The following are the major objectives of the Institute:

1. Establish and manage a Braille printing press to produce learning, teaching and leisure reading materials.

2. Establish and manage a library of reading materials and recordings for the visually impaired persons.

3. Produce large print materials for persons with low vision.

4. Teach Braille reading and writing skills to persons living or working with blind persons.

5. Offer rehabilitation services to persons with visual impairments.

\*Braille Library Services:

A national Braille library, the only one of its kind in the country. This library offers services to primary, secondary, tertiary institutions and the general public braille readers. Currently, it has in stock about five thousand (5000) different titles covering all levels of education and various disciplines. Most of these books are produced at the institutes Braille printing press. Others are donations from abroad. Lending and borrowing can be done through Post Office.

\*Rehabilitation and in-service Services:

Blind persons are trained in Braille reading and writing skills. Sighted persons are also trained in Braille reading and writing skills if they request for use in their work with the blind. Newly blinded persons. e.g. Bomb Blast Victims are trained in writing and reading Braille as well as orientation and mobility.

Other Services:

1. Brailling and debrailling examination scripts for colleges offering special education

2. Thermoforming services

3. Repair and maintenance of brailling equipment’s

4. Book/documents binding services

5. Cutting and distribution of braille papers

Final Thoughts:

Paul believes that the majority of people in Kenya do not understand the blind. He added that people don’t recognize the difficulties blind people face. The top three things that Paul would like to see available for the blind are:

1. To have more adaptive technology training

2. training in orientation and mobility, and accessible transport

3. establishment of a blind center for excellence, where blind persons can be trained to be independent

Paul is a strong advocate for persons with disabilities. His work has earned him the following accolades:

\*2015 Disability Activist of the year

\*July 2014: Life time achievement award Winner ANNUAL DISABILITY ADVOCACY RIGHTS & AWARDS

\*August 2013: Awarded "Champion of disability advocacy in the emergency response, by CBM International

Please check out the links below to learn more about Paul, and the great work he has done on behalf of persons with disabilities.

[www.mugambipaul.com](http://www.mugambipaul.com)

<http://youtu.be/KLPoeG8f73o>

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**\*\*3** Shared by Second Sense

**Free Legal Services**

The Kane Legal Clinic can help individuals with vision loss with a number of legal issues at no cost. Services include Social Security Disability, unemployment benefits, workers compensation, wills, powers of attorney, landlord /tenant relations and small claims court. The attorneys at the clinic can also help with reading and organizing documents and completing and filing legal forms. The Kane Legal Clinic is located at the Chicago Lighthouse, 1850 W. Roosevelt Road, Chicago. To make an appointment with an attorney, contact Carol Anderson at 312-997-3667 or email Carol Anderson. <http://chicagolighthouse.org/program/kane-legal-clinic/>

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**\*\*4** From Second Sense

**Nature for the Blind**

Do you know how many sensory gardens and braille trails there are in the world? Over 165! You can find where they are by visiting [www.naturefortheblind.com](http://www.naturefortheblind.com) . The Braille Nature Trail directory connects people with vision loss to a wide variety of outdoor resources including braille trails, sensory gardens, summer camps and sports organizations. The site also includes the history of braille trails and important information on why access to nature for people with vision loss matters.

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**\*\*5** Shared by John P. Gordon, Bureau Chief- BBS

Friedman Place - a not-for-profit community for adults who are blind or visually impaired – is inviting artists to submit works to be included in an exhibition of artworks associated with vision, blindness, or disability.

The exhibition will be displayed at Friedman Place for two weeks, with the opening occurring at our “**Celebrating the Arts at Friedman Place**” fundraiser on Thursday evening, May 18, 2017. It is expected that the artwork will be viewed by 500 people or more during the entire period of the exhibition. <http://www.friedmanplace.org/>

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**\*\*6** Shared by John P. Gordon, Bureau Chief- BBS

**Research Assistance Requested – Opinion on self driving cars**

I am excited about this and I am hoping you guys could send this out to all of your members and encourage them to take part in this survey. These folks will evaluate this information which will hopefully kick-start self-driven cars for people who are blind and visually impaired. Thank you.

Researchers at the University of Florida are currently soliciting responses for an online survey to gauge the opinions of people who are blind or visually impaired regarding self driving cars. Your participation will help engineers and policy makers better understand the needs and concerns of individuals who are visually impaired in designing self driving car technology and writing related policies.

If you are an individual who is blind or visually impaired we would greatly appreciate your participation. Participants will be entered in a drawing for a $300 gift card. For additional information regarding the risks and benefits of the survey or to complete the survey itself please visit www.evalui.com or click the link to the website below. The survey information and the survey itself are both screen reader accessible. After reviewing the risk and benefit information and entering your email address on evalui.com you will be directed to the start of the survey itself on the University of Florida survey system.

The survey website is: <http://evalui.com>

Thank you,

Julian Brinkley

Human Centered Computing PhD Candidate

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**\*\*7** Shared by Nicky Gacos, President NABM/Donnie Anderson, ICBV Chairman

Chao says **U.S. drivers may face more tolls to raise infrastructure funds** By Ashley Halsey III March 4

Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao this past week raised the prospect that needed infrastructure improvements may be funded to some extent by imposing tolls on more of the nation’s roads and bridges.

It was unclear whether she intends to expand tolling on the U.S. interstate system.

The concept of granting massive tax credits to lure private infrastructure investment was the centerpiece of President Trump’s campaign promise to raise $1 trillion for roads and bridges.

“To launch our national rebuilding, I will be asking Congress to approve legislation that produces a $1 trillion investment in infrastructure of the United States,” Trump said in Tuesday’s address to a join session of Congress. He said the money would be raised “through both public and private capital, creating millions of new jobs.”

Beyond repeated calls to draw private investment, however, the White House had not reiterated its campaign promise to raise at least of portion of the money through new tolls. Even if investors attracted by the 82 percent tax credit Trump said he hopes to offer, they would expect an additional return on their money, and when it comes to roads and bridges, that cash would come from imposing new tolls.

“The federal government cannot assume the cost for all of it,” Chao said Tuesday night in a Fox News interview after Trump’s address, reiterating a point she made during her Senate confirmation hearing. She told Fox host Sean Hannity that “new and innovative ways” were necessary to find funding.

She said the president had “exciting and novel ideas about how to finance” what independent authorities estimate is the need for $3.7 trillion to meet infrastructure needs by 2020.

“Public private partnerships are a very important part of a new way of financing our roads and bridges,” she said. Asked whether that would require imposing new tolls, Chao responded “that is certainly one example of how that would work.”

“I have to say that there are some people who may not support toll roads,” Chao said, “but we have to take a look at all of these financing mechanisms, because once again, the needs of our infrastructure are so great that the federal government cannot and should not be the only source of funding to repair our bridges, our roads and our energy grids.”

The challenge in luring private investment to build roads and bridges is that vast portions of the country outside of high-traffic volume urban hubs would not produce the toll revenue desired by investors.

There has been strong bipartisan opposition in Congress to imposing tolls on the interstates, beyond those like the New Jersey and Pennsylvania turnpikes that were grandfathered in when they became part of the network. One senior Democratic senate aide said any plan that relies primarily on tolling is “dead on arrival.”

Chao has been largely unavailable to reporters since taking the Cabinet post, and she was whisked away after addressing a convention of transportation officials this past week. Her staff did not respond when asked repeatedly what percentage of U.S. roadway Chao thought might be tolled and whether more drivers who use interstates might face tolls in the future.

The Congressional Budget Office said in 2015 that just 26 private-investment projects were completed or underway nationwide.

Overreliance on private funding already has been called into question by one influential senator, John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), who chairs the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works.

“Funding solutions that involve public-private partnerships, as have been discussed by administration officials, may be innovative solutions for crumbling inner cities, but do not work for rural areas,” Barrasso said at a committee hearing last month.

White House Said to Kick Off Infrastructure Planning Thursday

March 1, 2017 05:00PM ET | Bloomberg Government

(Bloomberg) -- President Donald Trump’s administration will convene a meeting of at least 15 federal agencies Thursday as a first government-wide step toward crafting the president’s $1 trillion infrastructure initiative, a senior White House official said.

Gary Cohn, director of the National Economic Council, will lead the meeting, which will focus on identifying new projects that would boost the economy; finding existing projects, such as the Keystone XL pipeline, that could be expedited; targeting policies, outdated rules and laws that could delay projects; and developing funding and financing options, the official said.

The meeting follows Trump’s speech to a joint session of Congress on Tuesday, when he said he wants to leverage public-private partnerships and public capital to upgrade crumbling roads, bridges, ports and other infrastructure. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that all funding options are currently on the table. Lawmakers and policy experts have floated ideas that include taxing corporate profits that are parked overseas and creating an infrastructure bank.

The official said that a proposal will be developed and presented to Trump, but the timing is uncertain. Most U.S. infrastructure is owned and controlled by states and municipalities, so the federal government’s role is more regulatory. Trump has already issued an executive order to expedite environmental reviews and permitting for high-priority projects.

‘Percolate Up’

The National Governors Association provided to the White House a list of 428 priority projects from 49 states and territories on Feb. 8 that it had solicited from the states. How projects will be selected for funding has yet to be determined, the White House official said. Governors from both political parties, interviewed at their annual winter meeting in Washington last weekend, said they expect to play a key role in those decisions.

“At the end of the day, I think it’s going to percolate up from the governors,’’ said Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe, a Democrat and president of the National Governors Association. “They can’t get this done in Congress without us.’’

Republican Governor Mary Fallin of Oklahoma, a former member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, echoed McAuliffe’s concern. “It’s important to have that state input into what is a national priority,’’ she said.

Trump, meanwhile, has been building his team to work on the plan. The White House announced on Tuesday that DJ Gribbin will serve as a special assistant to the president for infrastructure policy, under Cohn. Gribbin, a former chief counsel for the Federal Highway Administration and general counsel for the U.S. Department of Transportation, has worked on public-private partnership deals for Macquarie Capital USA Inc.

‘Every State’

During his speech to Congress, Trump called for “a new program of national rebuilding,” likening the initiative to President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s construction of the interstate highway system across the U.S.

Lawmakers are anxious for details. Representative Peter DeFazio of Oregon, the top Democrat on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, said it’s “time to put some flesh” on Trump’s proposal. “What’s missing is a real plan and the money,” DeFazio said after Trump’s speech on Tuesday.

Representative Bill Shuster of Pennsylvania, the Republican chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, said he’s met with Trump and his policy staff and told them there have to be projects in all states.

“We should look at every state and say what are the projects that are going to bring the states along,” Shuster said Wednesday at a meeting of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials in Washington.

Democrats including DeFazio and even some Republicans have argued that trying to rely on the private sector alone won’t generate $1 trillion of investment or allow projects in all parts of the U.S. Deals involving private investment require a revenue stream such as tolls, which aren’t popular or even practical in rural or thinly populated areas.

Spurring Investment

Democratic congressional leaders support more spending on infrastructure but say that the proposed mechanisms to spur private investment -- such as a tax credit -- would only benefit the wealthy. Republican congressional leaders have made it clear they won’t support a significant increase in spending that isn’t offset by cuts so that it doesn’t add to the debt or deficit.

The White House official said it’s premature to speculate what the mix of private and public funding and financing might be. U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao said her office was exploring new ways to finance infrastructure, including through public-private partnerships, to attract private investment and remove barriers.

“Business as usual is just not an option anymore,” Chao said Wednesday at the transportation officials’ gathering in Washington. “Everyone can agree that our country can no longer take decades to build a new bridge or a new road, a new highway or airport.”

Following up on yesterday's meeting schedule for next week (please let me know if you plan on attending any of the meetings noted in my prior email below), I wanted to flag for you a few news items over the last 24 hours:

1) Trump Speech to Congress

Last night Trump reiterated plans to introduce a $1 trillion investment plan, saying it would be funded with "both public and private dollars" and that it would be guided by two core principles: Buy American, and Hire American. Beyond that it was light on details about what would be included in the package and how it would be funded. It is becoming clear the more we speak w/ folks on the Hill that such a package would have to ultimately tied to tax reform.

2) DOT secretary Elaine Chao Speech today to AASHTO

-Secretary Chao addressed the trade association for state DOT officials today, and called for the removal of barriers that hinder "public private partnerships" (or PPPs, a phrase that I view as a euphemism for tolling). This is obviously a troubling sentiment for her to express, but I'd note a couple of things: First, she made this statement more in the context of streamlining permitting and environmental reviews and things of that nature -- which we would all likely support. Second, the people in her audience today -- state DOT officials -- are going to be a driving force behind efforts to expand tolling and other revenue-raising mechanisms. So this could very well have been her simply making high-level remarks that she knew her audience would support.

3) Senate Commerce Committee Hearing

The Senate Commerce Committee held a hearing today examining improving access to infrastructure in rural communities. At the hearing Chairman John Thune (R-SD) said that while public private partnerships may be useful in certain highly populated areas, they "are not a substitute for traditional infrastructure investment." Ranking Member Bill Nelson (D-FL) was more direct, saying America cannot "toll our way out of infrastructure problems." Speaking with reporters after the hearing, Thune reportedly said that focusing solely on PPPs "is clearly not an approach that is going to work very well, certainly where I'm from."

As I've said before, the fact that tolling doesn't help lesser traveled rural areas will help our efforts, especially in the Senate, where the EPW and Commerce committees are populated largely by senators representing such states.

We have meetings scheduled next week with the primary staffers on EPW and T&I covering surface transportation issues. The purpose of the meetings is to (re-)introduce the coalition to them, and get their advice / intelligence on what the next few months look like, let them know that we'll be meeting with their committee members, etc.

The meeting schedule is below.

Tuesday March 7 -- Murphie Barrett (T&I Majority) -- 2:00pm; 2253 Rayburn

Tuesday March 7 -- Helena Zyblikewycz / Kathy Dedrick (T&I Minority) -- 3:00PM; 2167A Rayburn

Thursday March 9 -- Rebecca Higgins (EPW Minority) -- 10:00am; Hart 508

Thursday March 9 -- Jan Brunner (EPW Majority) -- 10:45am; Hart 415

Also, you may have seen some news yesterday that President Trump told the National Governors Association that he will deliver a "big statement" on his infrastructure plans in his speech tonight before a Joint Session of Congress. We'll obviously keep an eye on this tonight and let you know what we learn.

Also yesterday, VA Gov. Terry McAuliffe, Chairman of the National Governors Association, said that he and other governors back the concept of "public-private partnerships" (which I view as a euphemism for tolling) to fund infrastructure. Clearly we have some educating to do.

David H. Fialkov

Vice President, Government Relations

Legislative and Regulatory Counsel

NATSO, Representing America's Travel Centers and Truckstops

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**\*\*8** **IAMC Legislative Report** on the 100th General Assembly

2017 Spring Session March 3, 2017 Prepared by BP Consultants

for IAMC

Only the Senate was in session this past week. Both the House and Senate return Tuesday, March 7th with a continued focus on committee action. The Senate deadline to report substantive bills from committee is March 17th and the House deadline is two weeks later.

At the beginning of the week it looked like there was progress on the Senate compromise “grand bargain”. Several of the less-controversial components were passed, including:

SB 3 (Senator Tom Cullerton) – Makes it easier to consolidate local governments. The bill passed on a vote of 43-14-2.

SB 5 (Senator John Cullerton) – Gives Chicago public schools assistance for their pensions. The bill passed on a vote of 35-22-1.

SB 6 (Senator John Cullerton) – Makes $7.7 billion appropriations for the rest of FY17 for a variety of things not covered by consent decrees and court orders, such as higher education, MAP grant program and several human services programs. The measure also includes pay for state workers in case a court rules they can’t be paid without a budget. The bill passed on a vote of 42-16-1.

SB 8 (Senator Harmon) – Streamlines state purchasing rules. The bill passed on a vote of 41-16-2.

The Senate also passed one of the more controversial components of the package – gambling expansion. SB 7 (Senator Link) expands gambling by adding 6 new casinos (including one in Chicago), allowing existing casinos to expand and allowing video gaming at horse racing tracks. The bill passed on a vote of 31-26-0. All of the bills that were approved on Tuesday are being held in the Senate on motions to reconsider the votes by which the bills passed.

The final bill in the grand bargain package that was considered on Tuesday was the pension reform provisions. SB 16 (Senator John Cullerton) incorporated several changes from previous plans that were mentioned by Governor Rauner in his Budget Address. That included creation of a Tier 3 plan that would put workers either in a hybrid system that combines a 401(k)-style plan with a traditional defined benefit plan or choosing a straight 401(k). The bill also would allow members to continue receiving 3% annual increases in their pensions, but at the cost of not having future raises count towards their pensions. The bill failed on a vote of 26-27-2 and was put on postponed consideration.

After Tuesday’s votes, Senate Republican Leader Radogno said that there were “very few” loose ends that still needed to be resolved on the remaining bills in the package. It was expected that the remaining bills in the package, including workers compensation revisions, revamping the school funding formula and raising revenues, would be considered on Wednesday. The latest version of revenue enhancements drops plans to raise the state sales tax on food and medicine, one provision that Governor Rauner had said he opposes. An amendment was filed to SB 9 (Senator Hutchinson) that would apply the sales tax to a broader range of services than was originally discussed, including storage lockers, private detectives, lawn care, pest control and personal care services (such as massages, tanning, tattoos and body piercing). The income tax increases would remain as previously discussed. There was also discussion about limiting the property tax freeze to two years with the option for voters to extend it three years, versus making it permanent.

On Wednesday, after both sides of the aisle held caucuses, Senate President Cullerton announced that there would not be any more votes at this time on the grand bargain package of bills. He said he was told by Senate Republican Leader Radogno that there would be “very little if any Republican support other than herself” for the remaining bills. “This was always designed to be a bipartisan effort,” Cullerton said afterwards. “Many of these tough bills require support from both parties. As a result, there’s no sense in calling bills to have them defeated.” Cullerton did not say what the next step will be, but also said the Senate will be prepared to vote on the rest of the package when the time comes.

Governor Rauner’s administration has set up a website that is intended to recruit people willing to work for the state in the event of a strike by union employees. Working for a Better Illinois is at <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/statejobs> . According to the site, this “allows citizens of Illinois who are interested in working for the State to provide their contact information, along with the type of work and location where they would like to work. In the event of a labor strike, the State will use this information to match citizens’ interests with the State’s needs.” The administration announced that in 3 days over 1,700 people had applied for positions. In response, AFSCME said the administration’s move would leave unqualified workers trying to perform state jobs. AFSCME wants Rauner to return to the negotiating table and continue bargaining over a new contract. Rauner has refused, saying that the Illinois Labor Relations Board has ruled the talks are at an impasse. That allows the administration to impose its last, best and final offer on the union. AFSCME has gone to court to block that.

Upcoming Important Dates and Deadlines:

March 7, 2017 – Next Session Date for House and Senate

March 17, 2017 – Senate Substantive Committee Deadline

March 31, 2017 – House Substantive Committee Deadline

April 8 – 23, 2017 – Spring Break for General Assembly

April 28, 2017 – House Third Reading Deadline for Substantive House Bills and Senate Third Reading Deadline for Substantive Senate Bills

May 12, 2017 – Senate Substantive Committee Deadline for House Bills in the Senate

May 19, 2017 – House Substantive Committee Deadline for Senate Bills in the House

May 26, 2017 – House Third Reading Deadline for Substantive Senate Bills and Senate Third Reading Deadline for Substantive House Bills

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**\*\*9 Tom Cullen & Associates – Session Update** March 3, 2017

(removed duplicate information provided by IAMC)

The Senate adjourned for the week, and both Chambers will reconvene Tuesday, March 7th at 12 p.m. The House was not in session this week. Two weeks remain to consider substantive senate bills in committee, and four weeks remain to consider substantive house bills in committee.

Illinois’ fiscal situation continues to deteriorate, and the path forward once again remains unclear. Illinois’ bill backlog now stands at $11.9 billion. The State is operating for its second fiscal year without a comprehensive operating budget, and no leaders’ meeting is scheduled. The Senate “Grand Compromise” negotiations are currently at an impasse. Bond houses continue to downgrade Illinois’ credit ratings, with some calling Wednesday’s actions by the Senate a “missed opportunity.” A lawsuit is pending to stop payment for state employee payroll absent appropriation authority. Another lawsuit is pending to determine the impasse status of contract negotiations with AFSCME. And, a majority of AFSCME members have authorized their bargaining committee to strike. The General Assembly will continue to meet and take up the business at hand, and it is hoped by many that negotiations will being again prior to May 31st.

HFS issued a new Medicaid Managed Care RFP. Governor Rauner announced his plan to “reboot” Illinois’ Medicaid managed care program to improve healthcare delivery while ensuring sustainable costs. A copy of the RFP is here. Interested parties must submit a proposal to HFS by May 15th, and the Department will make awards on June 30th. The effective date of new contracts will be January 1, 2018. The Department is seeking 4-7, “financially-sound” MCOs to enter into risk-based contracts. The State will extend the geographic coverage of managed care to all 102 counties statewide, including the 72 counties not currently covered under capitated managed care. Bidders may choose to: (1) cover all 102 counties; or (2) participate in only Cook County (government or minority-owned companies only). If bidding on a statewide contract, the bidder must be capable of being the sole DCFS MCO. HFS will roll-out the new plan on a phased-in basis, with difference packages of service, etc., coming online at different times (ie – families, nursing homes, DD waiver services, etc). While the State hopes to make 3-5 awards statewide, it is not obligated to do so. For the Cook County-only portion, only County Care and potentially Next Level are qualified.

A new statewide coalition has been formed to stop the ACA repeal. Protect Our Care – Illinois is a statewide coalition of health care advocates, providers, consumers, and workers that is part of the national Protect Our Care Coalition and Families USA.

Another insurance company has announced it will leave the ACA Exchange next year. Humana, which covers approximately 150,000 lives in 11 states, including Illinois, cited unbalanced risk as a mitigating factor. Humana is rumored, however, to be considering a bid on the State’s MCO RFP. Due to planned and denied acquisitions and pending lawsuits, insurance analysts say that other insurance companies could follow suit (Aetna, Anthem, & Cigna).

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**\*\*10** This week on Eyes On Success

1710 **Graphiti Refreshable Tactile Graphics Display** (Mar. 1, 2017)

Graphiti is a dynamic multi-level tactile touch display designed to give

the blind access to graphical and pictorial information at an affordable

price. Hosts Nancy and Peter Torpey talk with Venkatesh Chari, President and CTO at Orbit Research, and Ken Perry, project manager at APH, about this revolutionary, page-size display and how it can be used.

The audio and show notes can be found at:

[www.EyesOnSuccess.net](http://www.EyesOnSuccess.net)

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**\*\*11** **From Hadley School for the Blind and Visually Impaired**

Seminars@Hadley Presents:

**Using the NLS Digital Talking Book Machine**

to Access Hadley Courses

Seminar Date: Wednesday, March 8, 2017

Seminar Time: 11:00 AM CST; 17:00 GMT

Would you like to learn about the National Library Service’s versatile Digital Talking Book Machine (DTBM)? Are you curious about delving into the physical layout and operation of the player, its built-in help features and its troubleshooting strategies?

Join Seminars@Hadley as Hadley technology instructor Vikki Vaughan shares tips and techniques for using the DTBM to access Hadley courses, including navigating the Bookshelf feature, as well as various navigation levels within a Hadley course.

Larry Muffett, a member of Hadley’s Seminars team, will moderate this 60-minute discussion. A question and answer session will be included as part of this audio seminar. Register now for Using the NLS! <http://hadley.edu/SeminarDetails.asp?sid=354>

Seminars@Hadley Presents:

Low Vision Focus @ Hadley Presents:

**VisionAware — A Wealth of Resources**

Seminar Date: Thursday, March 16, 2017

Seminar Time: 10:00 AM CDT; 15:00 GMT

VisionAware is a wealth of resources for older adults with vision loss. According to its mission statement, “VisionAware helps adults who are losing their sight continue to live full and independent lives by providing timely information, step-by-step daily living techniques, a directory of national and local services and a supportive online community.”

Join Seminars@Hadley as Priscilla Rogers, Program Director of VisionAware, describes how this valuable initiative can help older adults with vision loss, their families and caregivers.

Larry Muffett, member of the Seminars@Hadley team, will moderate this 60-minute discussion. A question and answer session will be included as part of this audio seminar. Register now for VisionAware. <http://hadley.edu/SeminarDetails.asp?sid=355>

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**\*\*12** Shared by Chris Danielsen via NFBNet

**National Federation of the Blind, Sensotec NV Announce Launch of**

**KNFB Reader for Microsoft Windows 10**

March 1, 2017 (San Diego): The National Federation of the Blind and Sensotec NV, creators and developers of the KNFB Reader smart phone app, today jointly announced the launch of KNFB Reader for Microsoft Windows 10. This groundbreaking new product, which brings the world's best document-reading software for the blind and print-disabled to the Windows family of personal computers and tablets, was announced as part of the 32nd annual CSUN Assistive Technology Conference hosted by California State University at Northridge.

Like its smartphone counterparts, KNFB Reader for Windows 10 allows the blind and others with print disabilities to access the content of printed documents, including bills, brochures, books, magazines, handouts, and more. Users can simply photograph the document and KNFB Reader will almost instantaneously convert the image to text that can be read aloud in synthesized speech or output to a connected refreshable Braille display using a compatible screen reader. KNFB Reader for Windows 10 incorporates KNFB Reader's signature audio and vibration guidance to help the user align the camera and take the perfect image of a document so that processing is fast and accurate. It's also the perfect desktop PC or laptop application for recognizing image-based PDF files.

Mark A. Riccobono, President of the National Federation of the Blind, said: "The National Federation of the Blind is pleased to bring our one-of-a-kind reading technology to the Windows platform so that more blind people can acquire the information they need to live the lives they want. The blind and others with print disabilities who benefit from this product will now have instant access to printed documents, at their desks or on the go, on the device of their choice. We continue to break down the barrier of access to print that has been faced by the world's blind, and we look forward to continued collaboration with our partners and friends at Sensotec NV and Microsoft to integrate this life-changing technology into Windows now and in the future."

Jenny Lay-Flurrie, Chief Accessibility Officer at Microsoft Corp. said, "We are thrilled to add KNFB Reader to our Windows 10 family of applications and deeply appreciate the opportunity we've had to work with the National Federation of the Blind and Sensotec NV to bring its valuable capabilities to our customers. At Microsoft, we believe in the opportunity for accessible technology to empower every person and every organization on the planet to achieve more, and KNFB Reader is a great example of technology that can help people do exactly that."

Thanks to support from Microsoft, KNFB Reader will be available to download for an introductory price of USD $19.99, 80 percent off the normal purchase price of USD $99.99. This offer is for a limited time only. Prices vary by country.

For more information about KNFB Reader, please visit [www.knfbreader.com](http://www.knfbreader.com) .

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**\*\*13** Shared by Giovanni Francese, ICBV Vice Chairman for Vistar

**Vistar** Great Promotion this Month on **Mrs. Freshley’s** New Items!

Order Mrs. Freshley’s NEW items now at a great value for a limited time. Choose from single serve muffins in classic flavors or guilt-free chips (cookies) that deliver all the sweetness of cake with the crunch of chips!

\*From Kathy - Ask when you place your Vistar orders. On the promo sheet it looks like the promos are from $1.80 up to $4.80 deliveries through the week of 3/27.

Also a Great Promotion Vistar is offering this Month On **Nature Valley** and **Fiber One Items**!

\*From Kathy - Ask when you place your Vistar orders there are several new items, like granola cups, biscuits, and granola bars. Some with promos from $4.58 to $20.16

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**\*\*14** Broker News from **Saverino & Associates**, Mark Saverino

**Nemos** has a new Corn Bread muffin available.

Note the **International Cup** **USG cups** are a great value to the RSA USG customer, if I can get you cup samples please let me know.

**Otis Spunkmeyer Muffins** – Banana Nut, Wild Blueberry, Chocolate Chip 24 pack 4 oz – earn extra Purchase Power rebates through April 30th.

**Biscomerica** any combination of products delivered between January 1 and March 31, 2017 and written through Mark Saverino @ 630-868-2629 (call him and let him know that you are in on this promotion, ask him to track your qualifying purchases and pay out rebate at completion)

59961 Sweet Serenity Chocolate Chip 60/2oz $1.20

54809 Sweet Serenity Chocolate Chip 48/3oz $0.96

59861 Sun Maid Oatmeal Rasin Apple 60/2oz $1.80

59862 Sun Maid Blueberry Greek Yogurt Chip 60/1.75oz $1.80

64741 Columbus Cappuccino Cookies 60/2oz $1.20

54806 Basil’s Cappuccino 48/3oz $0.96

**Vitners** through March 31st

$1.08 off invoice (when you order) on the following 36 pack 1.5 oz items

402475 Plain Chips

402476 Sweet & Tangy BBQ Chips

402477 Chicago Smokehouse Rib Ridgetts

402478 Jalapeno

402479 Sweet Southern Heat BBQ

402481 Buffalo Wing & Blue Cheese

402480 Sizzlin’ Hot Potato Chips

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**\*\*15** **RSA Buying Group Information**

RSA Management Purchase Power Deals

Earn Extra Rebates on the following:

NEW DEALS THIS WEEK

FRITO LAY – ITEMS MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE IN ALL MARKETS

Deal Date: MARCH 5, 2017- APRIL 2, 2017 – TAKE DELIVERY BY APRIL 15, 2017

Rebates Products

$1.92 per case Sunchips – Whole Grain Harvest Cheddar (44427)

$1.92 per case Sunchips – Whole Grain Garden Salsa (44428)

$1.92 per case Smartfood Popcorn – Sea Salt (62147)

$1.92 per case Ruffles – Cheddar and Sour Cream Baked Potato (44400)

$5.00 per case Harvest Nuts – Mixed, Cashews, Toffee Glazed Mix, Fruit and Nuts, Premium Almonds

$2.40 per case Munchies Crackers – Cheese Peanut Butter and Toast Peanut Butter

FRITO

Deal Date: THROUGH MARCH 5, 2017 - DELIVERY BY MARCH 18, 2017

Rebates Products

$1.92 per case Rold Gold and Rold Gold Thins – ALL FLAVORS

PEPSI INNOVATION PRODUCTS (Through Authorized Distributors Only)

Deal Date: THROUGH MARCH 31, 2017

Rebates Products

$1.00 per case Kickstart 12 oz. Hydration Raspberry Citrus

$1.00 per case Kickstart 16 oz. Mango Lime

$1.00 per case Propel 20 oz. Watermelon Flavored Water

$1.00 per case Lipton 20 oz. Mango Tea

$1.00 per case Lipton Pure Leaf 18.5 oz. Pomegranate or Mint Flavored Tea

FOLGERS

Deal Date: THROUGH MARCH 31, 2017

Rebates Products

$2.00 per case Folger’s Vacket - All Products

$3.00 per case Folger’s Filter and Frac Packs – All Products except Premium

$4.00 per case Folger’s Premium Filter and Frac Packs – Café Bustelo Regular and Decaf, Black Silk Frac or Filter, Folger’s Classic Roast Filter, Folger’s 100% Colombian Fitler. \*\*\*Purchase 50 Premium Tier Cases and receive a $200 bonus\*\*\*

GATORADE

Deal Date: THROUGH MARCH, 2017 –DELIVERED BY APRIL 7, 2017

Rebates Products

$1.50 per case 20 oz. Gatorade and G2 – ALL FLAVORS

LIFE WTR

Deal Date: THROUGH MARCH 31, 2017

Rebates Products

$3.00 per case 1L Single Serve and 700 ML Sports Cap – ALL FLAVORS

PEPSI (Through Authorized Distributors Only)

Deal Date: THROUGH MARCH, 2017 –DELIVERED BY APRIL 7, 2017

Rebates Products

$2.00 per case 16 oz. Kickstart 12 count – ALL FLAVORS

$2.00 per case Lipton Tea 24 count– ALL FLAVORS AND BRANDS

$1.50 per case 20 oz. Sierra Mist – ALL FLAVORS

PEPSI – NEW PRODUCTS (Through Authorized Distributors Only)

Deal Date: THROUGH MARCH, 2017 –DELIVERED BY APRIL 7, 2017

Rebates Products

$2.00 per case 16 oz. Mountain Dew Spiked Raspberry and Lemonade 12 count

$2.00 per case 12 oz. Can 1893 Black Currant and Citrus Cola – 12 count

$2.00 per case 12 oz. Izzi Fusions Orange Mango, Lemon Lime or Strawberry Melon

$2.00 per case 14 oz. Lipton Tea House 12 count– ALL FLAVORS

$2.00 per case 12 oz. Lemon Lemon 12 count – ALL FLAVORS

$2.00 per case 20 oz. Gatorade FLOW 24 count – ALL FLAVORS

$2.00 per case 16.9 oz. Gatorade Organic 12 count – ALL FLAVORS

$2.00 per case 20 oz. Propel Infused 12 count – ALL FLAVORS

SMUCKER’S SUGARS

Deal Date: THROUGH MARCH 31, 2017

Rebates Products

$2.00 per case 400 ct. Sweet n Low Tabletop box - 4 pack

$2.00 per case 200 ct. Sugar in the Raw Tabletop box - 2 pack

$3.00 per case 200 ct. Stevia in the Raw Tabletop box – 2 pack

$4.00 per case 1000 ct. Sugar in the Raw Organic White Balk Pack

STARBUCKS – NEW ITEMS

Deal Date: THROUGH MARCH, 2017 –DELIVERED BY APRIL 7, 2017

Rebates Products

$2.00 per case 13.7 oz. Frappucino 12 count – ALL FLAVORS

$2.00 per case 11 oz. Doubleshot with Protein 12 count– Caramel Flavor

$2.00 per case 6.5 oz Doubleshot Espresso - Espresso and Salted Caramel

$2.00 per case 11 oz. Cold Brew 12 count

Deals ending in March

CHEESEWICH

Deal Date: THROUGH MARCH 31, 2017

Rebates Products

$1.44 per case Cheesewich Meat and Cheese Snacks– All Products

WOLFGANG PUCK COFFEE PODS

Deal Date: THROUGH MARCH 31, 2017

Rebates Products

$2.00 per case Wolfgang Puck Coffee Pods – All Products

Deals ending in April

OTIS SPUNKMEYER

Deal Date: THROUGH APRIL 30, 2017

Rebates Products

$1.20 per case 4 oz. Wild Blueberry, Banana Nut and Chocolate Chip Muffin 24 ct.

Deals ending in June

OREO

Deal Date: DELIVERY JUNE 30, 2017

Rebates Products

$0.2 per unit Oreo Chocolate Bar

Deals ending in December

PLANTERS

Deal Date: DELIVERY BY DECEMBER 31, 2017

Rebates Products

$2.88 per case 2 oz. Planters Peanuts

$1.44 per case Planters Trail Mix Nut and Chocolate

TAYLOR CANDY

Deal Date: THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2017

Rebates Products

4% per case Taylor Candy – All Products

SPLENDA

Deal Date: THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2017

Rebates Products

$3.30 per case Splenda 4/400 ct. Sweetener Packets

$3.00 per case Splenda 2000 ct. Bulk and 12/50 ct. Sweetener Packets

$2.60 per case Splenda 12/100 ct. Sweetener Packets

$1.25 per case Splenda 500 ct. Bulk Sweetener Packets

WELCH’S

Deal Date: DELIVERY BY DECEMBER 31, 2017

Rebates Products

$.01 per unit Welch’s, Gummi Factory, Sour Jacks, Sun-Maid, Fisher – ALL FLAVORS

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