



GOVERNOR'S
EMPOWER RURAL IOWA
INITIATIVE

Governor's Empower Rural Iowa Initiative
Executive Committee Conference Call
Monday, February 8, 2021
1:30-2:30 PM

For zoom conference information, contact Liesl Seabert at liesl.seabert@iowaeda.com

I. Roll Call:

II. Approval of Minutes – 11/19/2020:

Minutes from the 11/19/2020 meeting had been distributed for review. Emily Schmitt moved to approve the minutes and Dave Duncan seconded. Approved unanimously.

III. Welcome Remarks from Lt. Governor Gregg:

Goals: ERI legislative update, protecting Rural Iowa, virtual ERI day on the hill, topics for 2021 discussions. Sandy Ehrig not able to join.

IV. ERI Legislative Proposals Update:

In regards to Broadband: Great year for us. Broadband connectivity proposal is \$450 M, \$150 each year over next 3 years. This would continue to require matching.

In regards to Housing: The workforce housing tax credits program funding proposal clear the backlog and double rural set aside. The Governor wants to double the whole program which would provide up to \$20 M for the rural set aside.

In regards to Budget: ERI has historically had \$300,000 for rural innovation grants, plus \$100,000 for rural housing assessment. The Governor is recommending changing that to just one ERI line item and moving to \$700,000 total, which would then potentially support the rural return, rural entrepreneurship, etc.

In regards to Beginning farmer tax credit: Governor has a bill addressing this topic. Other bills moving forward include one eliminating the inheritance tax.

- V. Protecting Rural Iowa Task Force Update:
One factor: We have to rely on Dept of Pub health to support this effort and during the pandemic that has been an issue. Through the legislative session several legislators are addressing this topic, so waiting to see how that plays out.

- VI. Empower Day on the Hill Discussion:
Will be virtual but structured similarly to past events. To be held via zoom on March 11. From 10:00 – 11:30. The agenda will include guidance on how you can help ERI with legislators.

- VII. 2021 Topics Discussion:
Discussion on what the task forces should focus on in 2021. Recommended topics included: accountability for the rural communities to keep them engaged in the task force efforts; continued housing work across the state; implementation on outcomes from 2020; focus on highlighting the work that has been done; continued discussion on attraction and retention; and focus on remote working.

- VIII. Questions and Comments from Executive Committee
- IX. Next Steps
- X. Adjourn