

THE ANNUAL BILL DEBATES

Iowa Senator Hubert Houser, and Iowa Representative Gerald Jones spoke to Club members about legislative actions going on at the state capital in Des Moines. Each is in fifth year of their respective offices. Over 200 bills were submitted in the House of Representatives and about 90 in the Senate this legislative session. Furthermore the Senate has the same number of members of each political party, while the House has a slight Republican majority. Senator Houser remarked that this balance of party affiliation in the legislature has seemed to slow legislative action, especially in the Senate, yet bills submitted for debate seem better prepared since vociferous debate is expected for each bill. Representative Jones commented on several bills under discussion. One bill regarding pseudoephedrin sale restriction has already been enacted as law. A bill to increase the rural interstate speed limit to 70 mph passed the House and is being debated at the Senate. A revised sex offender registration bill is being discussed. As chair of the subcommittee of veteran affairs, Jones is promoting bills to establish a state veteran's cemetery and lifetime hunting permits for veterans for a one-time fee. Senator Houser noted that state appropriations are 6% higher this year compared to last year and the annual appropriations bill is up for debate this week. Other senate issues being debated are early child education and support for the Iowa Values Fund. Houser is chairman of the Senate Natural Resources and Environment Committee. This committee has address methods to reduce deer population and to promote Iowa ownership of alternative energy sources developed in the state. Senator Houser noted a land acquisition to significantly enlarge Wabonsie State Park so that it might become a vacation attraction in Southwest Iowa.