

IL Forestry Association Legislative Report | November 2009

By Paula & Jenni Purdue

Veto Override Session is completed for this year. We have no new revenues and there were no changes made in the lobbyist fees. We are still working on changing the lobbyist fees. The Secretary of State had agreed changes in requirements of lobbyists for reporting – those changes were not made either. We thought there was an agreement of the leaders to make the changes before the veto session occurred but that agreement did not maintain. You need to be prepared to spend \$1,000 instead of \$350.00 to register as an entity to lobby next year. The next scheduled session days are Jan. 12-15, 2010, after that week they are not in session until after the primary election which is Feb. 2, 2010. The schedules for House and Senate session are posted on the [IL General Assembly Web site](#).

We have four legislators who are interested to serve on the Forestry Development Council. They are Sen. Deanna Demuzio (D), Sen. Dale Righter, Rep. Naomi Jakobsson (D) and Rep. Jerry Mitchell (R). The IFA Legislative Committee has collected names of foresters who would also like to serve. The letter with these names will be given to the Governor's office.

Dave Gillespie and I have met several times with Mike Mason at DNR to build a stronger relationship with DNR as we move forward through the next session.

Our thanks to your legislative committee who has worked to increase the political clout of IFA members and a special thank-you to Dave Gillespie, legislative chair, who is only a phone call away to assist us at any time.

Few lobbyists believe that we will have an income tax increase before the general election 2010. If that is true, next year's budget will be worse than this year's budget. I hope that we are all wrong and an income tax increase is passed. If and when an income tax increase is passed, there will need to be cuts because we are currently over 12 billion dollars in the hole. Normally, when a tax increase occurs, the legislature is able to give more dollars to all of the agencies which makes the pain of voting for a tax increase by a legislator easier to bare. I don't know how the budget can handle that change this time.

There are many folks running for Governor and other statewide offices. As mentioned above, the primary election is on Tuesday, Feb. 2nd. Any IFA/IAA members who want to share their concerns and interest in trees should have those conversations before the 2nd.