



AROUND THE DOME

August Potpourri:

Budget going nowhere: As if whistling in the dark, the legislative leadership continues to make assurances of a balanced budget by the end of the fiscal year, but no visible progress has been made. The legislature has met a few times over the summer, with thin agendas and occasional committee meetings, but no serious movement has been made toward the 2009-10 budget. Conferees have not been appointed to house-senate conference committees, thus no committees are scheduled.

Individual Appropriation sub committee chairs have been meeting to discuss options with their other chamber counterparts, but without new targets set by leadership, little progress has been made. Although nobody is wishing for it, it is looking more and more like the legislature will be pushing up against the October 1st deadline for new budgets.

Detroit Renaissance may expand: According to the MIRS Capital Newsletter, Detroit Renaissance members discussed a proposal to expand their organization into a statewide coalition by including companies like Dow Chemical, Whirlpool, Kellogg, Steelcase, Herman Miller, Meijer and Amway. "This will not represent a material change in the work plan activity of our organization," Brandon wrote. "We have been evolving to a more Michigan-centric organization over the past three years. However, we believe we will have a greater impact and be a stronger organization if we include CEOs from all areas of the state."

Corrections workers seek early out retirement plan: With T-shirts reading, "God created correctional officers so cops could have heroes, too." Corrections officers testified in favor of a bill that would extend early out retirement benefits to their members. A gallery full of correctional officers got their point across to the House Labor Committee, which heard testimony on HB 5197. Rep. Gary McDowell sponsored the legislation and testified before the committee, imploring them to pass the legislation for the corrections employees, who were left out of the two previous rounds of early outs. The Gov. Jennifer Granholm administration's plan to save between \$100 million and \$120 million by releasing roughly 3,500 inmates, while closing eight prison facilities.

Jobless Rate Down To 15%, still the worst in the nation: Unemployment dropped two-tenths of a percentage point from June to July to 15 percent, Unemployment dipped by 9,000 and total employment increased slightly by 5,000. "The Michigan jobless rate stabilized a bit in July, as hiring occurred in hotels and the nursing and residential care industry," said Rick Waclawek, director of the Department of Labor and Economic Growth's Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives. "However, because of the large number of auto workers already on layoff in June, the July model-changeover auto plant shutdowns resulted in fewer worker layoffs than usual."

Consequences of last years energy legislation: Consumers Energy's electric choice, bundled commercial and industrial customers will see a stranded cost recovery surcharge increase of .000900 per kilowatt-hour as a result of action taken today by the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC). Residential customers will not be affected. The Commission said the action was necessary due to a recent slump in choice sales and the mandates of last year's energy reform bill, Public Act 286 of 2008.

The "Around the Dome" newsletter is written monthly by BOMA's Michigan lobbying firm Scofes & Associates Consulting (S&A) for BOMA members to be aware of key issues in Lansing. In addition, S&A is monitoring top issues identified by the Government Affairs Committee. If you have comments on the newsletter or BOMA issues, please direct them to GAC Chairs Gregory McDuffee at Gregory_McDuffee@DWJBA.com, John Sier at John.Sier@Kitch.com or Janet Langlois at JLanglois@bomadet.org.

We welcome your comments and questions on BOMA advocacy issues.