

**For immediate release –Thursday, August 25, 2016**

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## **Working group to review alcohol policy in Iowa set, first meeting scheduled**

More than 80 years after first being written, Iowa's laws governing the alcoholic beverages industry are about to get a serious review.

Debi Durham, Director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority and Stephen Larson, Administrator of the Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Division, today announced the members of a working group they are spearheading to study Iowa's alcohol laws. Durham and Larson will then submit a report of recommendations to Governor Terry E. Branstad and Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds early in the upcoming legislative session.

"We have assembled a diverse group representing every aspect of the industry," said Larson. "Plus, as these are open public meetings, there will be plenty of opportunity for everyone to observe and comment."

The group will be studying existing law to discover potential ways to cut red tape and make the licensing and regulatory processes easier. The group will also explore how adjustments to the law could allow greater economic opportunities for local entrepreneurs in the industry, such as vintners, craft brewers and micro-distillers.

"Within the three tier system, we need to review how some laws might have to be adjusted to leverage the opportunity we have to grow a cottage industry in our state," said Durham.

Working group members include:

Debi Durham, Co-Chair, Director, Iowa Economic Development Authority

Stephen Larson, Co-Chair, Administrator, Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Division

Jay Wilson, Johnston, Assistant Vice President of Wine & Spirits at Hy-Vee and Chair of the Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Commission

Robert Fahr, Waterloo, President of Fahr Beverage and Chair of the Iowa Wholesale Beer Distributors Association

Dave Ropte, Des Moines, Owner of 515 Brewing and President of the Iowa Brewers Guild

Cassie Bott, Marengo, Onsite Manager at Fireside Winery and President of the Iowa Wine Growers Association

Garrett Burchett, LeClaire, Owner of Mississippi River Distilling Company and representative of the Iowa micro-distilling industry

Rick Przebieda, Business Manager of Controlled States for LUXCO and Chair of the National Alcohol Beverage Control Association (NABCA) Industry Steering Committee

Roxann Ryan, Des Moines, Commissioner, Iowa Department of Public Safety

Matt Hanlin, Cedar Rapids, Owner of Benz Beverage Depot

Matt Johnson, Council Bluffs, Owner of Barley's Bar & Grill and Chairman of the Board, Iowa Restaurant Association

Jeff McGinness, Iowa City, Owner of Wine Styles

Rick Hunsaker, Carroll, Executive Director, Region XII Council of Governments, Member At-Large

John Gray, Sioux City, Attorney, Member At-Large

The group will meet for the first time on Friday, September 9, at 2:00 p.m. The meetings will be open to the public and an agenda will be posted at least 24 hours in advance at <https://abd.iowa.gov>.

**Kick-Off Meeting:**

2:00-4:00 p.m.

Friday, September 9, 2016

Urbandale Public Library

3520 86<sup>th</sup> Street, Urbandale

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