

**NEWS**

# **& Views**

**N E W S L E T T E R**

## **AUTOMOTIVE RECYCLING INDUSTRY OF NEBRASKA**

1335 H STREET, SUITE 100  
LINCOLN, NE 68508-3748  
402/476-1528 FAX 402/476-1259

Winter 2011

### **GREATER MIDWEST AUTOMOTIVE RECYCLERS EXPO JUST AROUND THE CORNER**

There is still time to sign up for this year's Greater Midwest Automotive Recyclers Expo to be held at CoCo Key Water Resort and Convention Center March 10-12.

We've got great exhibitors lined up, and nationally known industry expert R on Sturgeon who will be conducting two courses: "What is it Going to Take to Compete in the Next Decade," and "Bench-marking to Achieve Maximum Profits."

You will also be updated on "How Health Care Reform Affects You and Your Busi-

ness and updates from Homeland Security.

There's also some fun time including a tour of Union Pacific's Headquarters and Museum and a tour of the Strategic Air and Space Museum.

Enclosed with this update are registration materials for the Expo. There's still time to sign up.

### **VOTE FOR YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

A ballots for election to the Board of Directors is included. Please vote and return the ballot by March 9. Winners will be announced at the Expo Banquet.

There are many fine individuals who are willing to serve for the industry.

### **LEGISLATURE WRESTLING WITH BUDGET AND OTHER BILLS**

The Legislature has just passed the one-third mark for this year, with anticipated adjournment at the beginning of June. Revenue shortage in the state is prompting the state to look at budget cutting measures well over \$900 million for the two year budget.

Legislation addressing towing has been heard in the Transportation Committee. L.B. 295 was heard on February 8. The bill was introduced by Sen. Steve Lathrop of Omaha. It would allow the Public Service Commission (PSC) to receive complaints regarding reasonableness of towing and storage fees for vehicles

towed. If the PSC receives a complaint, they may hold a hearing after receiving information from the parties involved in the action and the person towing or storing the vehicle will have the burden of proving that the charges were reasonable. Criteria for determining whether or not a charge is reasonable is included in the bill. If they determine the charges were reasonable, they may order the complainant to pay the charges and if they find them to be unreasonable, they may adjust the charges and assess a civil penalty against the respondent or both.

The bill remains in the Transportation Committee as of this date.

L.B. 353, was introduced by Sen. Scott Lautenbaugh, Omaha. It would clarify the load restrictions used by towing companies when transporting a disabled or wrecked vehicle from a roadway. Currently, weight and length restrictions can open a tower or wrecker from moving a disabled or wrecked vehicle to citation, even while acting in the interest of public safety. The bill would allow these machines to operate outside the current restrictions when transporting a wrecked vehicle to a place of safe-keeping. The bill was heard on February 15, and remains in the Transportation Committee.

L.B. 2431 was introduced by Sen. Galen Hadley of Kearney. The law clarifies that a bill of sale for a parts vehicle may be included as proof of ownership or transfer. The bill has been signed by the Governor.

This should help our industry, as many times, a title may no longer exist on some of the older vehicles.

Immigration reform legislation introduced by Sen. Charlie Janssen of Fremont, may not reach the floor of the Legislature his year. Modeled after the Arizona law, it appears the bill may not have the votes to make it out of Committee.

An additional measure introduced by Sen. Colby Coash, Lincoln, would require all employers to use the E-Verify System to check work eligibility status for all employees hired by a business. Currently, only those businesses with contracts with the state or government entities are required to use the E-Verify System.

L.B. 84 creates the State Highway Capital Improvement Fund and directs a half-cent of existing state sales tax to the Fund to be used for construction of high-priority highway projects. It is estimated that a half-cent of sales tax generates approximately \$125 million per year.

The revenue would be split between the state (83%) and cities and counties

(17%).

Local governments would allot their portion as provided through the current Highway Allocation formula and would be required to use the revenue for road and street purposes.

The diversion of the existing sales tax would begin in 2013 and continue for twenty years until 2033. The Department of Roads, in conjunction with the State Highway Commission, would be authorized to issue up to \$500 million in highway bonds to accelerate construction of high priority, high-dollar projects. Any bonds would be required to be issued by 2018 and paid off within twenty years (2038). Debt service would be capped at \$25 million per year paid off through the Capital Improvement Fund. The bill would require at least \$15 million per year in the Fund be used for the construction of the expressway system as determined by the department.

Sen. Deb Fischer of Valentine, the bill's sponsor, has designated the bill as her priority bill. It was moved to the floor of the Legislature 7 in favor and one not voting from the Transportation Committee.