

Spring Magazine 2020

Utah Update by John Hill

State Legislative Highlights – with 8 days to go...

The Utah State legislative session began on January 27, and ended March 12, 2020, with me writing this report on March 2nd, so some changes are expected after this recap. Now into the fifth week, our lobbyist, Gary Thorup, describes the legislative session thus far as: **slow, methodical, quiet and subdued**; *“it is as if the tax reform battle from last year sucked all of the life out of the legislators.”*

UPMRA held its annual Day on Capitol Hill lunch meeting on Wednesday, February 26th, and heard presentations from **Rep. Dailey-Provost** regarding her vaping bill that bans the sale of flavored e-cigarettes in all but specialty tobacco retail locations. **Rep. Harrison** also spoke to our members concerning her Tier 3 website and a bill that would have created an Employer Tax Credit for Child Care, which died in committee. We also heard from **Jim Olsen** (President of the Utah Beer Wholesalers Association) concerning HB 399 Alcohol Amendments and a proposed labeling requirement for each individual bottle and can of beer sold in Utah.

New State revenue numbers revealed an **on-going surplus of \$518 million in revenue earmarked for the Education Fund**, because it is derived from income tax revenues. On February 28th, teachers from Salt Lake School District decided to have a “show of force,” and took time off from work, forcing some schools to close, as teachers and friends of education marched up the hill to the State Capitol and held a rally asking for a 4% increase in education funding; **Utah remains last in the nation in education per-pupil-spending.**

Of the surplus revenue, very little is projected for the General Fund, so legislators have been creative in trying to find an education component to their funding requests, and **Speaker Wilson** predicts a repeal effort of the constitutional earmark for education in the next two years. Adding to that, a potential U.S. Coronavirus crisis and downturn in the economy has legislative leadership suggesting that **most of the surplus money should be placed into rainy day funds rather than returned to the public as tax refunds, rebates or rate reductions.**

The Legislature was also negotiating this session with the proponents of **Proposition #4**, that deals with the creation of a re-districting commission, a voter initiative that passed during the 2018 General Election to stop political gerrymandering. The Legislature and the proponents came to a consensus on amendments to the initiative and a planned protest at the Capitol was canceled. The sticking point in negotiations had been about setting legal anti-gerrymandering standards for the commission.

Sign up for UPMRA E-news by sending a request to: johnhill@upmra.com.

Sheraton Park City to Host 2020 Convention & Trade Show

The 2020 Convention will be at the Sheraton Park City, formerly the Park City Marriott on Sidewinder Drive, **September 9-11, 2020**. Following the success of the current convention schedule, we will again begin with a board meeting on Wednesday from 4:00-5:30 PM prior to an opening reception, have a big day of education and the trade show on Thursday, and end the Convention with golf on Friday at Mountain Dell Golf Course.

Blain Boelter appointed PMAA C-Store Committee Member

UPMRA president Blain Boelter has accepted the two-year appointment as Western Region PMAA C-Store Committee member. Blain will attend his first PMAA Washington Conference this coming May.