The Legislative Session is down to only 5 working days remaining which includes time needed for concurrence on bills and to review any vetoes by the Governor. A number of issues are floating around but everything is now focused on the budget. Senate Bill 1 which deals with the underfunded state pension program was sent back to Committee in the Senate and it looks like no action will be taken on the bill primarily due to the many protests of teachers around the state. Without action on the pension the state will have to put in over $3 billion in the 2 year budget to meet the funding needs for the pension. The state budget has passed the House a couple of weeks ago and was passed by the Senate this week and included a number of changes from the House version. The House and Senate have now started the process to work out differences and try to come up with a budget compromise that can be agreed on by both sides. During the process a wide range of programs and possible new revenue sources will be looked at but a complete tax reform will not take place this session. On a positive note House Bill 2 dealing with workers compensation fixes to keep rates from going up passed the Senate with some minor changes and if the House agrees with the changes it will be sent to the Governor for his approval. Below is an update on the bills that have seen any recent activity.

House Bill 2 - Legislation that seeks to update the state’s workers compensation system, which has seen no significant statutory changes since 1996. This bill will clarify limitation on reopening claims already in Kentucky’s law that will be applied, set appropriate limits for filing claims on injuries identified years after exposure, ensure the proper standard of care through treatment guidelines, address the state’s opioid addiction problem through formulary guidelines, encourage employers to bring workers back to work quickly and establish appropriate durations of payment of medical claims. Passed the House and was approved by the Senate with some minor changes and is awaiting concurrence by the House.

House Bill 609 – Legislation designed to improve transportation infrastructure in Kentucky to improve roads and bridges on state and county roads. Implements a user fee on electric vehicles, minimum increase in diesel fuel tax of .13 per gallon and .10 per gallon of gasoline and increases user fees on a wide range of transportation regulatory and license fees. Assigned to the House Appropriations and Revenue Committee and was discussed this past week but no vote was taken on the bill.

Senate Bill 1 - Pension reform legislation filed to address the state pension funding crisis which is one of the worst funded programs in the nation. The bill would make changes to address some of the cost issues to move the pension toward proper funding in the future. Assigned to the Senate State and Local Government Committee and appears that no action will be taken to move the bill.

A list of all the bills that are being followed in the current Legislative Session can also be found in the member’s only section of the KFIA website. You can go to the Legislative Research Commission (LRC) website at www.lrc.state.ky.us to see complete details on all legislation. To contact and find your legislator from the LRC website or call 800-372-7181 to leave a message or 502-564-8100 to speak directly to your legislator in Frankfort. Please contact the KFIA office with any legislative concerns.