

Week Four

This week started off slow and actually ended slow. At this time in the last General Session there were just a few less bills filed. Speaker Davy Carter has called for a "Committee of the Whole" for Wednesday upon adjournment. A committee of the whole is a procedure rarely used but it allows the entire body of the House to hear testimony and ask questions on the House floor in a style similar to our committee meetings. In this case, Governor Beebe will be presenting information. No votes are taken or recorded in these proceedings.

The General Assembly will be asked to support a proposed steel mill in Mississippi County by approving \$125 million in state bonds backed by General Revenue.

The Big River Steel mill is expected to bring in 500 jobs with wages averaging \$75,000 a year.

The General Assembly may authorize the bonds under Amendment 82 of the state constitution. Amendment 82 was approved by voters in 2004. It allows the legislature to approve up to 5% of the General Revenue budget for bonding of large economic development projects. [Click here to read the amendment.](#)

The first step for the legislature will be to conduct an economic analysis. Once the Speaker and Senate Pro-Tem receive a formal recommendation from the Governor, the legislature has 20 days to approve the bond issue.

Speaker Davy Carter described the current status of the project as "inning 2 of a 9-inning baseball game."

Bills of Interest Filed this Week ...

- HB 1269 Catlett, John (D) Prohibits an employer from basing one's employment status on concealed handgun licensure; requires employers to allow employees with handgun licenses to keep a handgun locked inside a vehicle in the employer's parking lot.
- HB 1272 Hickerson, Mary (R) Applies vehicular size and load restrictions and regulations, currently specified for highways, to streets and roads.
- HB 1280 Kizzia, David (D) Adds to the definition of prohibited novelty lighters those products intended for use lighting "gas grills and other combustible material" that have the prohibited audio or visual features.
- SB 262 Clark, Alan (R) Creates a sales tax exemption for property other than alcoholic beverages that is removed from a seller's stock and donated to a charitable organization or cause.

To look up any bill, to get the full text, go to:

<http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/assembly/2013/2013R/Pages/Home.aspx>