

IOWA STATE BOARDS OFFER FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT



Darrell Hanson, a member of the Iowa Utilities Board, works a full-time job for the board, which he has been doing for the previous four years. Hanson spends days on end in meetings, reviewing and reading orders, and writing reports about the impact air quality will have on the electricity rates in Iowa. "With the sheer volume of material we have to wade through, it's a constant process. This is a full-time job." There are only eight boards in the state of Iowa whose members get paid an annual salary. That is eight out of 175 boards in Iowa. There are roughly 700 board and commission members in Iowa, most of whom are volunteers that only receive compensation for food and travel expenses. Members of these boards work full-time jobs, requiring them to leave their previous jobs, because the hours put in total well over 40 per week. The boards in Iowa that are operated by volunteers do not require as many hours, the members have less power, and the jobs come with less responsibilities. "The Utilities Board is different because of the broad range of decisions we can make and the complexity of the industry we have to regulate," Hanson said. The eight boards featuring members who receive salaries include the Telecommunications and Technology Commission, the Utilities Board, the Employment Appeal Board, the Public Employment Relations Board, the Parole Board, the Transportation Commission, the Property Assessment Appeal Board and the Racing and Gaming Commission. "The key question is, can you do that position and still maintain a regular outside job?" Hanson said. "Utility regulators are not jobs where you can maintain another source of income." In order to serve on the Utilities Board, Hanson had to leave his job with the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach program back in 2007. Before that, he served on a volunteer group named the Environmental Protection Commission. The Environmental Protection Commission meets only once per month, considering the workload and the time commitment necessary from its members. "When I was on the commission, I would take one day off work and drive to Des Moines, and we would have an all-day meeting, and then I would be done for the month," Hanson said. "We decided we would use a consistent term to keep the boards and commissions straight." Tim Hagle is a University of Iowa associate professor of political science. Hagle had the following to say: "But there is a wide variety of what they do, and we would hope that the pay or salary would be representative of the responsibilities that these folks have," Hagle said. "This is a good way to "tap the knowledge of people in the state without putting them on the state payroll.

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