

Here is more than you want to know about MoDOT. We lead off with the state-of-transportation speech and wind up with legislative news. Jack Briggs - jackbriggs@mchsi.com

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STATE OF TRANSPORTATION ADDRESS PRESENTED: On Feb. 7 MoDOT Director Pete Rahn presented to a joint session of the House and Senate the department's State of Transportation Address. This address provides an opportunity for MoDOT to present to the members of the general assembly and the general public an update on the state's current transportation systems. The State of Transportation Address is scheduled to expire after 2008 unless the general assembly votes to extend the five-year sunset on this statutory requirement.

The following is a copy of Director Rahn's 2007 State of Transportation Address: Lt. Governor, Mr. Speaker, Mr. President Pro Tem, Distinguished State Officials, Members of the 94th General Assembly, Members of the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission and Citizens of Missouri:

Missouri has been shaped by the evolution of transportation. We have been blessed with great natural wonders and by the pioneering spirit of visionaries. Mighty rivers carried the canoes of the first Missourians. Lewis and Clark's keelboat followed close behind providing a gateway to the west and the great steamboats of the late 1800's revolutionized travel and commerce.

Missourians also witnessed the advance of railroads that drove western expansion and economic growth throughout our state. Crude cattle trails with now-famous names became roads and then super interstate highways, and flying contraptions led to bustling airports across Missouri that connected us overnight to the world.

Each improved form of transportation produced greater economic opportunity and increased our personal freedom. Today we enjoy, and frankly take for granted, the finest transportation system in the history of mankind. Our livelihoods, our security, our independence, in essence-our very way of life-depend upon the pavements, waterways, rail and runways that link our vast nation. In the very heart of this system, Missouri has great opportunity and a great responsibility.

It is because of this importance that I am proud to report to you that the state of transportation in Missouri is improving dramatically.

This improvement has been the result of greater investment in our transportation system - investment that creates jobs, personal income, economic activity and many millions of dollars of state general revenue, which can be used for education, health care, public safety and other vital services.

The Missouri Department of Economic Development reports that our 5.7 billion-dollar, five-year statewide transportation improvement program provides an impressive economic benefit to citizens. Ultimately, for every one billion dollars we invest in transportation we generate 3.6 billion dollars in economic activity.

History has demonstrated that investing in transportation has always been of significant value. Transportation is a good investment that returns great yields and leads to a better Missouri. We are seeing the benefits of greater investment in other ways, too.

Our busiest roads are smoother. 74 percent of Missouri's major highways are now in good condition and drivers are feeling the difference.

Our most traveled highways are safer. We have installed brighter, wider stripes; larger, easier-to-read signs; emergency reference markers; rumble stripes and median guard cables. As a result, 173 fewer people lost their lives in 2006.

According to USA Today, this 14 percent drop is the third largest decrease in traffic fatalities among all states and the District of Columbia. Now, that is a ranking of which we can all be proud.

Ladies and gentleman, our roads are getting smoother and safer, sooner because your department of transportation is getting more efficient and effective every day.

This improved effectiveness was illustrated on December 8, 2006. I was pleased to join Governor Blunt in placing a big yellow banner reading "Completed One Year Ahead Of Schedule" on a Smooth Roads Initiative highway sign.

When we set out to use Amendment 3 funds to make Missouri's busiest 2,200 miles of roads smoother and safer in just three years, we thought that would be an extraordinary accomplishment.

In his 2006 State of the State Address, however, the governor challenged us to deliver the program one year early. And -- as soon as I regained consciousness -- we started working to meet the governor's challenge.

Last year we did just that and the words on the banner changed to reflect completion of the vital initiative not just as promised, but one year and 23 days early.

We cannot, however, at this time place a "Completed As Promised" banner on our mission to make Missouri's highways and bridges better. Together, we have made great advancements toward a world-class transportation system, but we have a long way to go. There are, however, positive indicators of our success. We are hearing from customers commenting about the noticeable improvements in Missouri's roads.

In December, we had further proof of drivers feeling the difference in the condition of our highways. A nationwide survey of truckers by Overdrive Magazine ranked Interstates 44 and 70 in Missouri as the second and third most improved highways in the country.

That is a dramatic change from just the previous year when that same magazine ranked I-44 in Missouri as the second-worst highway in the nation and our highways overall were also ranked second-worst.

This is progress, but not victory. During the past year we have announced steps to make further improvements to our state's roads. Just last month, the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission approved the Better Roads, Brighter Future Program.

If you thought the Smooth Roads Initiative was impressive, just wait until you experience this. Better Roads, Brighter Future is the Smooth Roads Initiative on steroids.

This groundbreaking program will result in 5,600 miles of our busiest highways being smoother and safer by 2012. I would add that 95 percent of Missourians live within 10 miles of these routes.

These better roads will include smooth pavement; brighter, wider striping; larger signs; rumble stripes; and, in most cases, a minimum four-foot paved shoulder. This means that the success of the Smooth Roads Initiative and all of its improvements will now be applied to our entire major highway system.

At the same time, the program will mean a brighter future. Smooth roads increase fuel efficiency by 2.4 percent. That savings will put an additional 100 million dollars back into the pockets of Missouri's drivers.

Additionally, it will create employment opportunities up and down the highways we improve.

But our efforts don't end there. I thank the General Assembly for the authority to use the innovative design-build method to deliver improvements to Missouri's transportation system.

Our first design-build project is Highway 40 in St. Louis or I-64, as we now call it. I-64 will be the largest single construction project in Missouri's highway history and the implemented innovations are unrivaled here or anywhere else in the country.

We have taken a project that would normally create a virtual parking lot on I-64 for seven years and accelerated construction to just three years with the public feeling significant affects for only two. And the resulting benefits will be worth the temporary inconvenience.

We will be rebuilding and upgrading all pavements and bridges and building 12 new interchanges on 10 miles of I-64 including a new high speed interchange at I-170.

Our innovative approach has already saved money and time while creating a model workforce development partnership for the region.

On the other side of the state, in Kansas City, we are proceeding with our second design-build project to replace the existing Paseo Bridge. We are calling this project kclCON because it will provide better interstate connections and will be a landmark bridge of which all Missourians can be proud.

KclCON will mean less traffic congestion and greater mobility in the Kansas City area. It also breaks new ground for community involvement. A 12-member Community Advisory Group has been formed whose members were selected by local officials to provide input and a public perspective regarding the architectural design of the bridge.

The third and final design-build project is our Safe and Sound Bridge Improvement Plan. Safe and Sound will mean more than 800 better bridges by 2012.

With over 10,000 bridges, Missouri has the seventh most of any state in the union. We face a crisis situation as more than 1,000 are structurally in serious condition. Many are one step away from being closed.

Our bold approach to improve our bridges in record time is not only innovative, but also unprecedented. Other states, transportation organizations and national publications are watching this program with great interest.

A team of contractors and designers will be selected to perform all of the work. This approach works well with large, complicated projects and will give us the best possible opportunity to save money and complete the program within its aggressive time schedule.

Each of the bridges will be replaced or repaired and the successful bidder will be required to keep them in good condition for at least 25 years. If their solutions don't perform, we don't pay. That is the ultimate protection of Missouri taxpayers for an extreme makeover of Missouri's bridges.

With all of this innovation accelerating our program, and thanks to voter approval of Amendment 3 in 2004, it is little wonder that we have experienced the largest highway construction program in Missouri history.

Missourians benefited from 1.4 billion dollars invested in road improvements in 2006 meaning that our highways are getting safer and smoother, our state is getting more prosperous and our quality of life is improving.

The people of Missouri trusted us with additional funding through Amendment 3. MoDOT said that we would put that money to quick use improving your state highways. We said what we

would do and then we did it. We are on schedule for successful completion of Amendment 3 improvements and to declaring "Completed as Promised."

Our accomplishments, however, have not been limited to highways. We have also worked to improve other modes of transportation in our state.

In June of last year, we began the assessment of Amtrak rail service between St. Louis and Springfield. Additionally, I was proud to certify for operation the MetroLink extension in August. Both of these developments mean the potential for more and better transportation options for Missourians.

We have also made strides toward improving local airports, which are so essential to economic development and business retention. We are currently building an airport with a 5,000-foot runway in Branson West -- the 30th such airport in Missouri. This type of airport is essential for accommodating larger business aircraft.

This will be the 7th new airport constructed by MoDOT since 1990. In fact, Missouri has built more new general aviation airports than any state in the nation during this 16-year period.

Missouri's waterways have also seen investment resulting in economic development. A 500,000-dollar grant to the Southeast Missouri Regional Port Authority in Scott City resulted in attraction of a corn milling business.

This economic development resulted in 40 million dollars of investment in the local community and creation of nearly 300 jobs in the area. The investment also helped bring about a nearby ethanol plant now under construction, which means another quarter of a billion dollars in private investment and 450 more jobs.

Unfortunately, with current funding, we cannot say, "completed as promised" to becoming a total transportation department. We are called a department of transportation, but we are funded like a highway department. We must find ways to increase investment in other modes of transportation.

When we speak of quality of life, we must discuss safety. We have worked hard to make our highways as safe as possible. And our efforts have led to a decrease in fatalities on our roadways.

Accelerating safety improvements under the Smooth Roads Initiative will save an estimated 14 lives and prevent 589 injuries this year. Earlier completion of these safety improvements will also result in a cost savings of more than \$74 million to the traveling public.

Another great life-saving measure has been the installation of median guard cables. Wherever the center median on our interstates is less than 60 feet wide, we have placed these cables. All of I-70 now has them across Missouri. Much of I-44 and I-29 also have these safety features and they will soon be complete on these corridors as well.

You need only to drive a few miles on these routes to witness the effectiveness of guard cables. As you drive, you will see how frequently the cables are being hit. It costs us nearly 4 million dollars per year to repair these strikes and maintain the guard cables overall.

This is money wisely invested, since each instance represents potential lives saved because the cables have proven 95 percent effective at stopping crossover crashes.

Despite the effectiveness of median guard cables and the other measures we have taken to make our highways safer, we all know that it is driver behavior that results in most highway

fatalities and serious injuries. The fact is that the most effective "guard cable" is the one you strap across your body when you enter your vehicle.

Unfortunately, not enough people are buckling up. We have seen a drop in safety belt use in Missouri. Usage rates went from 77 percent in 2005 to only 75 percent in 2006. This is the first time since 1998 that safety belt use has not increased.

Even more alarming, safety belt use is lowest among our youngest drivers. Teenagers buckle up only 58 percent of the time, and they make up a disproportionate amount of the people killed and injured in crashes each year.

The facts are clear and convincing. About 68 percent of the people who die in Missouri traffic crashes are not wearing a safety belt. A driver involved in a traffic crash in 2005 had a one in 32 chance of being killed if not wearing a safety belt. In those cases where drivers wore safety belts, their chance of being killed was only one in 1,017.

It is apparent that safety belts save lives, but only if they are worn. Despite our best efforts. Despite unprecedented public education activities. Safety belt use is on the decline in Missouri.

We all know what action would increase safety belt use based on examples from numerous other states. That action is the passage of a primary safety belt law.

I commend the 39 members of the Missouri House of Representatives who have signed on to co-sponsor House Bill 90 - Missouri's primary safety belt act.

As most of you know, that bill number was not an accident. We could save 90 lives per year by enacting a primary safety belt law. Safety belt usage is required by law now. This bill would simply allow for effective enforcement.

Of the more than 500 traffic offenses in Missouri, our safety belt law is the only one that deliberately discourages police enforcement. The effect of the current law is to declare that a cracked taillight or a dirty license plate is a higher priority for law enforcement than life saving safety belts.

It is time to act. We spend billions of dollars making our highways safer. Without spending a dime, we could save 90 lives each year. It is imperative that we make 2007 the year we say, "completed as promised" about a primary safety belt law and saving those 90 lives.

That promise, however, will not be fulfilled just once. Each of you who help enact this bill will know that with every year that passes, you have saved another 90 lives.

Unfortunately, we are also losing too many MoDOT workers in the line of duty. In the past five years we have lost nine employees. Last year the General Assembly took an important, life-saving step by making work zone laws stricter and the penalties more severe. I thank you, sincerely.

In 2006, four MoDOT employees lost their lives. Bob Eftink, Robert Mayer, Ken Hoierman and William Crain were killed in the line of duty working to make our transportation system better.

MoDOT team members made many sacrifices over the past year working long hours, including nights and weekends, serving the people of our state. These four gentlemen made the ultimate sacrifice in service to the public.

Relatives of Bob Eftink, Robert Mayer, Ken Hoierman and William Crain are here today. They represent the loved ones they lost and the families of all MoDOT workers who have made great sacrifices for the people of Missouri. I ask them to stand so we can express our appreciation.

We have accomplished great things together over the past year. It is our duty, however, to look toward the future, not to remain in the past. That future will require us to think differently than we have before.

Transportation is too important to be locked into conventional solutions. To address the needs of our future, we will have to look beyond what is currently accepted to what is most effective.

The needs we must address are substantial. By 2012 -- just five years from today -- there will be nearly 800,000 more large trucks annually on I-44 and greater than 700,000 more large trucks on I-70. This vital commercial traffic will only increase beyond 2012 and will be even higher in urban areas.

We cannot ignore this growing traffic and I am convinced that we must include dedicated truck lanes as part of our solution to separate semis from family sedans on our two most critical roadways -- I-70 and I-44.

This will make driving safer and more comfortable for motorists and truckers. This can be accomplished within our current cost estimates of 7.2 billion dollars for improvement to both interstates.

The growing traffic congestion on our interstates will be even worse in urban areas. By the year 2020, drivers on the Poplar Street Bridge in St. Louis will experience three-hour backups during morning peak commute times. We must do everything we can to prevent that from happening.

A New Mississippi River Bridge is critical to the long-term economic health of the St. Louis region. Unfortunately, given current funding, we have no means to pay for this project. It is imperative that we find an innovative solution to paying for this bridge.

This bridge and our interstates are just a portion of the 32,000-mile highway system we maintain - the seventh largest in the country. We have nearly 27,000 miles of lettered routes that are so vital to our overall system. Currently, and for the foreseeable future, we can only try to maintain them in their current condition without any significant improvements.

These routes are particularly important for the movement of crops and agricultural products, which are imperative to the economic health of our state. Without additional funding, we can do little to accommodate the changing nature of farm equipment including the transition from the old two-ton flatbed truck to the tractor-trailer rigs that are so common on today's farms.

In order to rebuild our largest, busiest interstates. To improve our lettered routes. To impact growing urban and suburban congestion. To truly move transportation forward in Missouri. We must find a way to direct more dollars to our roads and other modes of transportation.

We are in the midst of a bubble for funding of highway construction. From the top of this peak we can observe a very low valley. Our current construction program of 1.3 billion dollars, the largest in Missouri history, drops off a cliff in 2010 and plummets to 569 million dollars, which is slightly less than where we were prior to Amendment 3.

I am extremely pleased to see a dialogue about the need for greater transportation funding beginning in the legislature this year. I know that legislation has been introduced that will allow for thoughtful debate about funding highways, bridges and other modes. That is a crucial first step.

As your department of transportation, it is our duty to ensure that taxpayers are confident in our ability to utilize additional funding effectively and efficiently. They also expect us to use the money to improve their roads. We have demonstrated our ability to do just that.

When we started the Smooth Roads Initiative, only 47 percent of Missouri's major highways were in good condition. Today, 74 percent of those highways are in good condition.

We have shown that given additional resources we will use them wisely and for their intended purposes. As we were investing record amounts in highway construction, we were only spending two percent of our budget on administration and with no additional full-time staff.

We have applied practical design to our roads and bridges by cutting out the frills and simply meeting needs. We have applied that same concept to administrative expenses and are directing the maximum amount possible to making our transportation system better.

And, we are being recognized for our efforts.

Roads and Bridges magazine said MoDOT, "has turned over a new leaf, and infrastructure repair work started to flourish over the last year."

Midwest Contractor magazine called MoDOT the leader in innovation among the states in its region.

The Kansas City Star said that MoDOT deserves credit for considering "new approaches to financing infrastructure" in regard to our Safe and Sound Bridge Plan.

And, the Jefferson City News Tribune editorialized that MoDOT has gained momentum and that "The best way to restore credibility is with action, not talk, and the department has done precisely that."

I am grateful for their comments.

Your department of transportation said we would work hard to build credibility with the people of Missouri.

We said we would make your roads smoother

We said we would make your roads safer.

We said we would get the best value out of every taxpayer dollar we have been given.

But we are not prepared to say, "Completed as Promised" to all of those goals because we will always work to do things even better, faster and cheaper.

Our future, however, does show great promise and, together, we can make sure that "Completed As Promised" becomes the motto for transportation in Missouri.

Thank you and may God bless your travels.

MHTC/MoDOT NUMBER ONE PRIORITY SCHEDULED FOR HEARING: On Feb. 13, HB 90, enforcement of a primary safety belt law, is scheduled for a public hearing before the House Transportation Committee. HB 90, sponsored by Rep. Neal St. Onge (R-Ellisville) chairman of the House Transportation Committee, is the number one 2007 legislative priority for the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission (MHTC) and MoDOT.

A primary safety belt law could strengthen the state's secondary enforcement statutes by giving law enforcement officers the necessary means to stop drivers of automobiles who are not

properly buckled up in their vehicles. A primary safety belt law in Missouri could mean 90 lives a year could be saved and over 1,000 serious traffic injuries could be eliminated.

MoDOT and the MHTC are members of the Primary Safety Belt Coalition which is made up of over 700 safety minded entities including, but not limited to insurance agencies, hospitals, law enforcement agencies, emergency personnel, construction companies, and so on.

Also on Feb. 14, a version of a primary safety belt law will be heard in the Senate Transportation Committee. SB 17, sponsored by Sen. Charlie Shield (R-St. Joseph), is similar to HB 90, but it also contains a provision in the bill that would eliminate vehicle safety inspections for the state of Missouri.

Next week's GR Report will primarily focus on these two hearings.

**SALES TAX EXEMPTION ON CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS:** The House Ways and Means Committee heard testimony on HB 248, sponsored by Rep. Neal St. Onge (R-Ellisville), pertaining to the exemption of sales taxes currently paid on construction materials purchased for MoDOT projects. The bill, according to the sponsor, is needed to place Missouri contractors on an equal playing field with out-of-state contractors where most of Missouri's bordering states offer the sales tax exemption. Theoretically, this concept could save MoDOT dollars because of lower bids and those cost-savings could put more money towards improving the state's highways.

Persons testifying for the bill included: Ray McCarthy, Missouri Transportation Development Corporation and the Taxpayers Research Institute of Missouri; Joe DeLong, DeLong Steel; Jack Atterberry, AGC-Missouri; Tricia Workman, AGC-St. Louis; Tammy Holiday, Heavy Contractors of Kansas City; and Pam Harlan, MoDOT.

There was no opposition to the bill and the committee took no further action.

**HIGHWAY NAMING:** On Feb. 7, the Senate Transportation Committee heard public testimony on SB 395. SB 395, sponsored by Sen. Ryan McKenna (D-Jefferson County), designates a portion of State Route M between Old Lemay Ferry Road and Moss Hollow Road in the City of Barnhart as the "Officer Stephen Strehl Memorial Highway."

Rob Hirst, Missouri State Secretary of F.O.P., testified for the bill. There was no opposition to the bill and the committee took no further action.

**SENATE HOPES TO END ANNUAL TRANSPORTATION ADDRESS:** What was placed into law just a few years ago by the Missouri General Assembly, and is set to expire Aug. 28, 2008, the Senate hopes to undo one year early. On Feb. 7, the Senate Transportation Committee heard SB 331, sponsored by Sen. Bill Stouffer (R-Napton), which would eliminate the annual state of the state transportation address given by the Director of the Department of Transportation to the General Assembly.

The reason Sen. Stouffer and several other Republican and Democrat Senators want to eliminate next year's address is because they believe the "State of Transportation" is perceived by many as an address that is viewed as being just as important as the annual "State of Judiciary" address by the Chief Justice of the Missouri Supreme Court or the "State of the State" address provided by the Governor.

Gary Marble, president of Associated Industries of Missouri, testified that the state of transportation address has provided the positive momentum needed to push MoDOT and the issue of transportation forward into the future.

There was no opposition to the bill and the committee took no action.

**UNIFIED CARRIER REGISTRATION PROPOSAL HEARD BY COMMITTEE:** On Feb. 7, the Senate Transportation committee heard public testimony on SB 200. The bill, sponsored by Sen. Bill Stouffer (R-Napton), authorizes the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission (MHTC) to take the necessary steps to implement and administer a state plan to conform with the federal Unified Carrier Registration Act (UCR Act) of 2005. The UCR Act includes provisions to eliminate the Single State Registration System (SSRS) by January 2007 and replace it with the Unified Carrier Registration (UCR) Agreement.

Under the act, MHTC may submit to the proper federal authorities a state plan to qualify as a base-state and to participate in the UCR plan and administer the UCR Agreement. The MHTC is authorized to administer the UCR registration of Missouri domiciled motor carriers, motor private carriers, brokers, freight forwarders, and leasing companies, and persons domiciled in non-participating states who have designated Missouri as their base-state under the UCR Act. The MHTC is further authorized to receive, collect, process, deposit, transfer, distribute, and refund UCR registration fees. This bill allows every motor carrier, motor private carrier, broker, freight forwarder, and leasing company that has its principal place of business within Missouri, and every such person who has designated this state as the person's base-state under the provisions of the UCR Act, to complete and file with the MHTC all the forms required by the UCR agreement and the UCR implementing regulations, and shall pay the required UCR registration fees to the MHTC.

The following persons testified in favor of the bill: Richard McIntosh, Missouri Dump Truckers Association; Tom Crawford, Missouri Motor Carriers Association; Todd Spencer, Owner Operators Independent Drivers Association; and MoDOT's Jan Skouby, director of Motor Carrier Services.

Ms. Skouby testified the latest federal transportation legislation replaced a commercial motor vehicle program implemented independently with a new uniform federal program. The new program is the Unified Carrier Registration or UCR. SB 200 will allow Missouri's commercial motor vehicles, both private and commercial, to meet these federal requirements here in Missouri rather than going to another state. SB 200 will also keep \$2.3 million in revenue in Missouri that is devoted to safety programs rather than the revenue leaving Missouri.

There was no opposition to the bill. The committee took no action on the proposal.

**FEDERAL MANDATE BILL PASSES COMMITTEE:** On Feb. 7, the Senate Transportation Committee voted "Do Pass" on SB 130. The bill will allow the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission the authority to void billboard permits without paying compensation under certain circumstances. These circumstances include: 1) when there has been any misrepresentation of a material fact by the applicant on a permit application and the sign is removed under law; 2) when the commission determines that a change has been made to a conforming sign by the sign owner and the sign has been removed under law; or 3) when the commission determines that a substantial change has been made to a nonconforming sign by the sign owner such that the sign's nonconforming status was terminated and the sign was removed under the commission's administrative rules for maintenance of nonconforming signs. The MHTC may also void any permit when it determines that such permit has been erroneously issued by MoDOT staff in violation of any state law or administrative rule. The billboard shall be subject to removal and compensation shall be paid pursuant to law.

The bill now goes to the Senate floor for debate.

**HIGHWAY SAFETY CLEAN UP ADVANCES IN THE SENATE:** On Feb. 7, during its executive session, the Senate Transportation Committee voted to approve SCS/SB 104. The substitute bill now waits to be debated on the Senate floor.

Specifically, the bill changes several references to the Division of Highway Safety to the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission (MHTC) and MoDOT. In 2003, Governor Holder transferred the powers and duties of the Division of Highway Safety under the Department of Public Safety to MoDOT. References to the Division of Highway Safety or the Department of Public Safety as it pertains to highway safety functions need to be changed to accurately reference the MHTC. The act specifically provides that the commission shall have the responsibility and authority for the administration of: 1) all state highway safety programs; 2) the annual preparation of the Missouri Highway Safety Plan and the receipt of federal highway safety funds; 3) regulations relating to approval of driver-improvement, motorcycle safety and ignition interlock programs; 4) compliance with any federal laws or rules required as a condition precedent to secure federal highway safety funds; and 5) contracts, licenses and authorizations issued by the Division of Highway Safety prior to August 28, 2003.

The act also expands membership of the Motorcycle Safety Program Advisory Committee from seven to eight members to create a place for a MoDOT representative.

The substitute bill also updates several sections of law relating to the operations of the highway patrol. The highway patrol was under the direction and authority of the MHTC until the early 1940's. This act repeals several laws that no longer apply to the operations of the highway patrol due to modernization of state government, technology and other statutes and adopted procedures.

Some of the changes proposed in the bill relating to the highway patrol include: 1) removing the current statutory requirement for the superintendent of the highway patrol to reside within the city limits of Jefferson City; 2) the act removes the requirement that general headquarters be open at all times and the requirement that a telegraph be available; 3) removes the requirement that the MHTC approve all personnel expenses and changes where civil witnesses fees are deposited; 4) changes the requirement that the superintendent divides the state into troops instead of districts; and 5) removes the requirement that the highway patrol send an end of the year fiscal report to the governor and the highway commission.

**MoDOT PRESENTS FY'08 BUDGET TO SENATE:** On Feb. 6, MoDOT's Chief Financial Officer, Roberta Broeker and the department's Multimodal Director, Brian Weiler, presented MoDOT's FY '08 budget to the Senate Appropriations Committee. Commissioner Mike Kehoe, member of the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission (MHTC) was also present during the budget overview.

While the state's Constitution provides MoDOT with the opportunity of managing its own highways and bridge portion of the budget - with oversight and approval by the MHTC - the multimodal section of the budget is subject to legislative action like many other state agencies who compete for limited state general revenue funds.

MoDOT's budget bill, HB 4, must first be debated and pass in the House before the Senate has a chance to act upon the department's appropriations question.

**GOVERNOR BLUNT INVITES BLAGOJEVICH TO ST. LOUIS FOR DIALOGUE ON ISSUES OF REGIONAL CONCERN:** Following a Governor's Summit on Feb. 1st with Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, Missouri Gov. Matt Blunt invited Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich to St. Louis for a discussion on issues of regional concern, including the Mississippi River Bridge.

"By working together in an open and constructive manner we can address issues and identify solutions that will benefit both states," Gov. Blunt said. "It is my hope that this meeting will serve as a launching point for ongoing discussions that will lead to greater economic opportunities and job creation for the St. Louis metropolitan area."

In a letter, Blunt invited Blagojevich to a meeting in St. Louis with business and community leaders from the St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association, the Regional Business Council and Civic Progress. Blunt proposes opening a new dialogue on potential solutions for a new Mississippi River Bridge and efforts to make the bi-state region a leader in the research and production of renewable fuels.

Blunt hopes the meeting will benefit both states as the two governors work together to capitalize on the bi-state regions' assets and attract more quality, family supporting jobs to the area.

Earlier on Feb. 1st, Gov. Blunt and Gov. Sebelius hosted the second annual Governors' Summit on Regional Economic Development in Kansas City to discuss economic development and education initiatives.

**U.S. SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION MARY PETERS TO BE KEY NOTE SPEAKER AT MISSOURI'S 2007 TRANSPORTATION CONFERENCE:** MoDOT is excited to announce that U.S. Secretary of Transportation Mary Peters has accepted an invitation to participate in this year's transportation conference as the keynote speaker. Secretary Peters has a reputation for innovative transportation thinking and has a special interest in investing in road and bridge construction.

Each year the Missouri Department of Transportation partners with the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and the Missouri Farm Bureau to host a statewide transportation conference. The conference brings together about 300 transportation leaders across the state to discuss various transportation related issues. This year, the conference will be held on Feb. 15 in Jefferson City and the theme of this year's conference is "The Future of Transportation."

Please contact your partners in person or by telephone and ask that they register for this conference. Registration is available on-line at [www.mochamber.com](http://www.mochamber.com).

**JOINT COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION OVERSIGHT:** On Feb. 26, the Joint Committee on Transportation Oversight will be conducting its first of three meetings for 2007.

Chairing the joint House and Senate Committee this year is Sen. Bill Stouffer (R-Napton). Co-chair is Rep. Neal St. Onge (R-Ellisville). Other members of the committee include: Senators Matt Bartle (R-Lee's Summit); John Griesheimer (R-Washington); Delbert Scott (R-Lowry City); Frank Barnitz (D-Lake Spring); Joan Bray (D-St. Louis); and Rita Days (D-St. Louis). Representatives include: Charlie Denison (R-Springfield), Sally Faith (R-St. Louis) and Charlie Schlottach (R-Owensville), Mike Daus (D-St. Louis), Robin Wright-Jones (D-St. Louis) and Ed Schieffer (D-Lincoln).

This particular meeting will focus solely on the approval or disapproval of specialty license plates for automobiles and highway naming requests.

**UPCOMING TRANSPORTATION EVENTS:**

- February 15- Annual Transportation Conference
- March 15 to March 26 - Legislative Spring Break
- May 18 - Last day of the 2007 legislative session