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Senator John Cauthorn Confers ‘*Golden Goose Egg Award*’ on Conservation Department

*Department’s Consistent Display of Fiscal Mismanagement
Pays Off With Second Egg In Just Four Weeks*

State Senator John Cauthorn, R-Mexico, this week handed a *Golden Goose Egg* to the state’s Department of Conservation for spending \$25,000 on exercise equipment.

“Is it just me, or is the conservation department supposed to be in the business of conserving natural resources, not wasting government money?” Cauthorn said. “If it’s exercise they’re after, how about getting outside, where Missouri’s natural resources appear to be most prevalent.”

As outlined in a lengthy report issued by the state auditor last month (*Available at www.auditor.state.mo.us/press/2003-17.htm*), the conservation department purchased the fitness equipment in 2001 and installed it in the agency’s Jefferson City headquarters for use by employees participating in a “wellness” program and by the DOC’s training academy for protection agents.

Quoting from the report’s analysis on the questionable expenditure: “While the health and well being of the employees is important, this does not appear to be a reasonable and prudent use of state monies. The expenditure appears to benefit only a limited number of DOC employees and does not appear necessary to support the mission of the department.”

“Well that’s a nail hit right on the head,” Cauthorn said. “The Department of Conservation throughout the report has shown complete disrespect for spending the public’s money wisely and efficiently.”

Chairman of the Senate's Government Accountability and Fiscal Oversight Committee, Cauthorn earlier this year launched the *Golden Goose Egg Award* after the actions of a former U.S. Senator who regularly handed out "Golden Fleece" awards to government agencies and entities executing less-than-capable fiscal policy.

Cauthorn noted that the conservation department now holds two Golden Goose Egg Awards. The department earned its first "win" a few weeks ago for granting more than \$800,000 in cash and land to establish a nature center that is overseen by former department managers, is nowhere near completion, may never be completed and has burned through all but \$8,000 in funding.

"Hey, I've got an idea," Cauthorn said, "how about selling the workout equipment and using the proceeds to develop the land they have acquired and finishing those trails that taxpayers long ago paid for.



The hallowed "Golden Eggs" from Sen. John Cauthorn's *Golden Goose Egg Award* program.

Cauthorn notes that no taxpayer money has been, or will be, expended on the award signage or "trophies." He also notes there seems to be no shortage of potential awardees...

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