



# WEEKLY REPORT

State Senator Gary Nodler  
District 32



Room 433 - State Capitol Bldg. - Jefferson City, MO 65101 - Phone: (573) 751-2306

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**March 13, 2003**

**For additional information contact:**  
**Barbara Mustoe**  
**(573) 751-2306**

## **Southwest Missouri Celebrates Its Rich Heritage**

This week, the Senate Transportation Committee approved legislation that I sponsored, Senate Bill 697, which would designate a section of Interstate 44 in Jasper and Newton counties as George Washington Carver Memorial Highway. I'm proud to report that 19 of my fellow Senators – Republican and Democrat – co-sponsored this bill.

If you have never visited the George Washington Carver National Monument in Diamond, I encourage you to do so. This Newton County landmark celebrates the life of this important scientist, inventor and scholar.

A visit to the George Washington Carver National Monument is a great way to rediscover Missouri.

In a related item, a new brochure highlighting Joplin's historical sites is being unveiled. The *Joplin Historical Guide* encourages all of us to become tourists in our own backyard.

Right now tourism is one of the only bright spots in our state's sagging economy.

With its central location and wide variety of activities and sites, the Show-Me State has always been considered a family-friendly destination.

Last year, the Missouri Division of Tourism launched a campaign called "Rediscover Your Missouri" in an effort to bolster tourism and encourage in-state travel. The campaign targets Missourians and travelers in neighboring states, inviting them to take advantage of all that Missouri has to offer.

Looking through this brochure, I'm certain that you'll be surprised by many of the sites. Even life-long residents may not realize all that can be found in Joplin. In honor of our area's close ties with the historic Route 66, there are 66 sites listed.

It celebrates Joplin's architectural history with an easy-to-follow map which is included and it will help you find such spots as Langston Hughes' childhood home.

Put together with a Missouri Division of Tourism 50/50 matching grant, this brochure is a good example of state and local governments working together to promote Missouri.

So go ahead and be a tourist in your own backyard, and by doing so you are keeping Missouri dollars in Missouri.

Statewide economic impact due to travel related expenditures exceeded \$12 billion in Fiscal Year 2002.

Jasper and Newton County received more than \$177 million in tourism related expenditures in FY '02.

Tax revenues from 17 tourism-related industry classifications increased by 2 percent over the last fiscal year and University of Missouri researchers are projecting additional increases in this area over the next two years.

Tourism is now one of Missouri's largest industries, with more than 200,000 Missourians working in tourism-related jobs. This amounts to 1 out of every 14 jobs. That shows just how important tourism is to our state.

- end -