



WEEKLY REPORT

State Senator Gary Nodler
District 32



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MISSOURI SENATE APPROVES LEGISLATION THAT REFORMS MISSOURI'S DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

All of us who regularly travel Missouri's highways are aware that our state's roads and bridges are rapidly deteriorating. The Missouri Senate this week perfected legislation that will enact a variety of accountability measures that pertain to the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT).

For years the General Assembly has wrestled with the issue of Missouri's roads, and the only remedy ever seriously discussed was more money.

However, last summer voters soundly defeated Proposition B and sent the message that MoDOT should get no new money until reforms were made within the department.

The voters have spoken and lawmakers are listening.

I know a number of Highway District 7 employees personally, and they are hard-working men and women who are further burdened by being forced to overcome public doubt and distrust created by past actions of the Highway Commission.

I believe that Senate Bill 481 is one way to begin to rebuild public confidence in the management of the state's Transportation Commission.

A Joint Committee on Transportation Oversight would be created and would hire a director and staff.

This director would handle citizen complaints and, with committee approval, could perform investigations, reviews and studies of the transportation department.

The committee director would issue reports both to the legislative committee and to the Transportation Commission. The first director would serve from next Jan. 1 to June 30, 2005, with all subsequent directors appointed for five years.

Other provisions in SB 481 deal with the Missouri Highway and Transportation Commission. The act prohibits members from engaging in political activities such as campaigning or fund-raising and provides for a commissioner of each party to be replaced at the same time.

In a related issue, the Senate third read and sent to the House of Representatives legislation that I sponsored which would designate as the George Washington Carver Memorial Highway, a portion of Interstate 44 in Jasper and Newton counties.

This section of highway is near the George Washington Carver National Monument in Diamond.

Dr. Carver was a rare combination – a good man, an astute scholar and an innovative scientist. His legacy has lived on around the world and I'm proud that the state of his birth will honor him in this manner.

Six weeks remain in the 2003 legislative session, and there is still a great deal of work left to be done. I will continue to keep you updated on the bills that impact the 32nd District. As always, if you have any questions feel free to contact my Jefferson City office.

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