

Column from Sen. Matt Bartle for

Week of Sep. 08, 2005

### **Amendment 3 Has Made for a Safer Missouri with Increased Funding for MoDOT Road Projects**

It has been less than one year since Missouri voters chose to improve Missouri roads with no new taxes. The overwhelming voter approval of Amendment 3 in November meant that more money has been available to the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) for road projects, and we've seen significant improvements already.

MoDOT's Smoother, Safer, Sooner campaign has been financed with approximately \$1.7 billion from Amendment 3 revenues. Amendment 3, which voters passed by a nearly four-to-one margin, allowed MoDOT to undergo a three-part program to improve state roads and the Missouri economy as a whole.

The Smooth Roads Initiative, which will provide 2,200 miles of better-quality pavement and shoulders and safer guard rails and lane dividers, improves the conditions of the busiest stretches on our state highways. These roads, a fraction of Missouri's total 32,000-mile road system, account for 60 percent of all Missouri traffic. And their conditions were showing it. But while three-quarters of the roads were in poor condition at the time Amendment 3 passed, every single mile will be in good condition by December 2007. These improvements are already underway in key areas.

Element 2 in the program will advance further programs in the state's five-year plan, and Element 3 adds new major projects that have been of particular importance to local officials MoDOT has worked with.

Together, these projects will improve the lives of Missourians by providing better transportation services to Missouri workers and kick-starting major industries that will benefit from the work opportunities these road projects will offer.

Consider the asphalt industry alone. Their contributions will be critical to the success of these road-improvement projects. MoDOT usually purchases about 2 million tons of asphalt each year for resurfacing. But for the Smooth Roads Initiative, the state will be buying 6 million tons a year.

By making for a safer and more efficient statewide transportation system, all of our citizens, workers and businesses will benefit. I applaud MoDOT for working hard to complete these needed projects and Missouri voters for seeing the need for them. Together, the state and its citizens have made for a better Missouri.

If you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by e-mail at [matt\\_bartle@senate.state.mo.us](mailto:matt_bartle@senate.state.mo.us) or by phone at (888) 711-9278.

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