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## Changing the Culture In State Government

*Spending Your Tax Dollars Wisely- "A Million Here and A Million There and You're Talking Real Money."*

The best way to fight higher taxes is by ensuring that the State of Missouri lives within its means. Like any business or organization, government must operate efficiently to attain its goals—in this case, serving the citizens of Missouri. The new leadership that took office almost exactly a year ago shares my goal of improving the efficacy of state government. The most prominent person in this movement is Governor Matt Blunt, who upon taking office challenged Missouri's 16 executive departments to provide a better and more efficient use of your tax dollars.



The Office of Administration (OA) continues to be at the forefront of the state's effort in becoming more efficient. Savings began earlier in the year when OA's Commissioner Mike Keathley, a Dexter native, saved the state approximately \$1.6 million by contracting janitorial and security services with private companies for certain state offices in Kansas City, Springfield, St. Joseph and St. Louis. Commissioner Keathley then identified ways to get rid of wasteful staffing policies by reorganizing many outdated job structures and consolidating staffing all without reducing services to the taxpayers. Next, OA began discontinuing wasteful leasing contracts and moved agencies into state-owned space. The change already saved Missouri \$1.2 million, savings that will add up to millions more over time. And just this October, OA announced that it will save the state a half million dollars annually by implementing a state vehicle use policy requiring employees to choose the least costly travel option by utilizing the Trip Optimizer. This online tool identifies the most cost effective travel option for instate trips.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Department of Corrections began implementing cost-saving spending initiatives earlier this summer as well. By agreeing not to purchase any new vehicles, other than emergency-response vehicles, DNR saved taxpayers more than \$1 million. On the operations side, DNR succeeded in cutting the time it takes to process most permits in half, from 14 days to 7 days, and increased their use of golf carts in state parks to reduce wear and mileage on park vehicles. The Department of Corrections contributed to the waste-eradicating efforts by consolidating their inmate education services to

save over \$1.4 million. The savings come from the Department's decision to close schools at three of the state's five maximum-security institutions. Education services at the state's 17 other correctional facilities will continue, with services prioritized to those inmates who will be out of prison the soonest.

This past month, Governor Blunt announced several other cost savings measures taken by state departments. The Missouri Highway Patrol made strategic purchases that will account for more than \$600,000 in cost savings. Purchases include a data center that enables the Highway Patrol to process tape scan data in house rather than paying an outside agency \$5,000 every time they need a scan, as well as a body repair shop allowing patrol vehicles with minor damages to be fixed in house. The Department of Economic Development identified \$557,000 in cost reductions, the largest of which is saving \$260,000 by developing a disaster recover plan for its Electronic Filing and Information System using internal resources. Finally, the Department of Revenue will save roughly \$500,000 by mailing postcards, as opposed to letter form, for motor vehicle renewal notices.

Missouri is going through a long-overdue spring cleaning. Missourians deserve efficient, effective, and responsible state government. I believe that taxpayers expect me to make sure that their hard-earned tax dollars are spent wisely and the hard work of ensuring that continues.

### **Contact Me**

As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions and concerns. Please feel free to contact me in Jefferson City at (573) 751-2459. You may write to me at Jason Crowell; Missouri Senate; State Capitol; Jefferson City, MO 65101, or email me at: [jcrowell@senate.mo.gov](mailto:jcrowell@senate.mo.gov) or visit me on the web at <http://www.jasoncrowell.com> and <http://www.senate.mo.gov/crowell>.

*Senator Jason Crowell proudly represents the people of Bollinger, Cape Girardeau, Madison, Mississippi, Perry and Scott counties in the Missouri Senate.*