



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the
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Better Roads for Rural Missouri

JEFFERSON CITY – This week Senators and Representatives met in a joint session to hear new Missouri Department of Transportation (MODOT) Director Pete Rahn's State of Transportation address. The director's address is among several oversight requirements enacted by the Legislature in 2003 to improve MODOT's accountability and credibility. Pete Rahn became MODOT's director last year after successfully heading up New Mexico's transportation agency for several years.

Rahn summarized MODOT's "Smoother, Safer, Sooner" roadway improvements initiative and discussed the positive impact made by increased funding resulting from voter approval of Amendment 3 last November. Four of five voters in Missouri said they wanted their roads fixed and voted to end the diversion portions of fuel tax revenue which had been going to other state agencies. Now all of the fuel taxes you pay at the pump will be used solely to improve the roads and bridges in this state.

Passage of Amendment 3 last November will allow MODOT to resume work on many of the priorities identified in the 15-year Transportation Plan of 1992. That's important when you consider Missouri has the third worst pavement conditions in the country, we are fourth in the nation in the number of deficient bridges, Interstate 70 is in a state of near crisis and Interstate 44 is just an I-70 waiting to happen.

The first element of MODOT's "Smoother, Safer, Sooner" plan, called the Smooth Roads Initiative, will provide 2,200 miles of better pavement with better striping and safer shoulders by the end of 2007. The highway miles included in the plan account for 60 percent of all traffic on

the state system and include interstates, major highways and highway corridors connecting smaller towns throughout the state.

I am hopeful MODOT can be an effective state agency under the direction of Pete Rahn, who has pledged to make MODOT a model for what state government should be - efficient, streamlined, forward-thinking, results-driven and customer-oriented.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please feel free to contact me at 573-751-8793 or by e-mail at: delbertscott@senate.state.mo.us

Senator Delbert Scott represents the people of Barton, Benton, Cedar, Dallas, Henry, Hickory, Pettis, Polk and St. Clair counties in the Missouri Senate.