



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

Delbert Scott
28th Senate District

CAPITOL BUILDING, ROOM 221
JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65101

**A Weekly Column for the
Week of January 2, 2006**

**Contact: Debbie Poire
(573) 751-8793**

Key Issues for New Session

JEFFERSON CITY – The Missouri Senate kicked off the 2006 legislative session this week as members gathered in the Senate chamber at noon on Wednesday, Jan. 4. Senators welcomed their newest colleague, Sen. Jack Goodman, R-Mt. Vernon, who this year replaced the late Sen. Larry Gene Taylor in the 29th District. There is also one vacancy in the Missouri Senate since the departure of Sen. Jon Dolan to the private sector.

Procedural matters, such as introductory remarks and the reading of prefiled legislation, filled much of the holiday-shortened week. However, members of the Senate Interim Committee on Tax Increment Financing met on Tuesday to discuss ways to better use tax subsidies for new developments. Tax Increment Financing, or TIF, is the method of using future tax revenues incurred from development to help pay for the costs of growth. Committee members finalized a report recommending ways to use development subsidies solely for blighted areas.

Several other key issues also will top the legislative agenda in 2006. Eminent domain, the process of claiming private land for public use, is under particular scrutiny after a controversial U.S. Supreme Court decision resulted in the formation of the Missouri Task Force on Eminent Domain. The task force is charged with examining Missouri eminent domain law and recommending specific legislation to the Missouri General Assembly. Currently, four measures relating to eminent domain have been prefiled in the Missouri Senate.

Energy policy is another important issue in 2006. The Missouri Energy Policy Task Force has made recommendations to the General Assembly for implementing a comprehensive energy action plan.

Lawmakers are expected to address rising heating costs, home-heating assistance for low-income Missourians, and agriculture-based and other renewable energy sources.

Lawmakers will again examine Medicaid, the state's health insurance system for low-income Missourians. In 2005, the General Assembly made several reforms to the system in order to cut waste, save the state approximately \$600 million, and ensure the feasibility of the program.

Passing the Fiscal Year 2007 budget, further protecting children from sexual predators and funding Missouri schools are other top priorities for Missouri lawmakers this year.

For more information on the Missouri Senate, visit www.senate.mo.gov. Visitors can track legislation as it passes through the General Assembly, learn more about their Senate district, or listen to streaming audio of legislative debate as it happens.

The Missouri Senate will reconvene at 4 p.m. Monday, Jan. 9. The Second Regular Session of the 93rd Missouri General Assembly will run through Friday, May 12.

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.mo.gov