



WEEKLY REPORT

State Senator Gary Nodler
District 32



Room 433 - State Capitol Bldg. - Jefferson City, MO 65101 - Contact Barbara Mustoe Phone: (573) 751-2306

Week of Jan. 23, 2006

The Worth of Efficiency

JEFFERSON CITY—Missouri's economy has proven to be resilient. A year ago, the state government was bloated—spending too much and progressing too little. But we began 2006 with the first substantial budget surplus in five years, emphasizing the success of last year's investments in education, job growth and the system reforms. Now we will be able to direct more money toward education and other important state programs. We will consider increasing education funding to \$167 million, which would fully fund our public school foundation formula and send \$17 million new dollars to higher education. Crowder College would receive \$67,075 of that, and \$422,243 would go to Missouri Southern State University.

This budget turnaround was due to lawmaker's prudent decisions. After reaffirming that our number one state priority is education, we focused on streamlining services and reforming programs so that we live within our fiscal means. Missouri's tax revenue has begun outpacing earlier estimates, leaving extra money from which to draw for the upcoming budget year. Although this trend shows promise, we need to maintain our course of pragmatic budget planning.

For many years, high energy prices have impacted various sectors in Missouri, from the agricultural industry to state government. A more resourceful use of energy requires up-to-date technology, which can be expensive to initiate, but the investment pays off tenfold by saving the state a substantial amount of money in the long run. Legislation I successfully sponsored in recent years addresses this issue with the creation of the Energy Efficiency Implementation Act, which allows a portion of savings garnered from the projects to be put into a reserve fund to go toward future energy-efficient projects.

The climbing costs of utilities needed to operate state government inspired this legislation. Between 2000 and 2005, the state's utility expenses increased by 38 percent, costing Missouri more than \$66 million this last year alone. By promoting energy-efficient projects for capital improvements, the effects of my bill will lead to significantly decreased utility bills.

-MORE-

For example, the lighting in some core state buildings was outdated and inefficient, costing state taxpayers unnecessary money. Under my legislation, Missouri established energy-savings contracts, allowing qualified contractors to replace all of the old lighting fixtures with new ones. The project will save the state \$360,000 a year, and the overall guaranteed energy savings amounts to \$4.2 million. After the project pays for itself, any additional savings is deposited into a reserve fund for other projects with the same aim, and the smart-spending cycle of saving state money continues. More than half a dozen new energy-saving projects are slated for the upcoming year and are expected to save Missouri taxpayers \$35 million over the next 15 years.

These promising financial benefits are proof that we are on our way to a more fiscally responsible state government. Saving money is never a bad thing. As your state Senator, I assure you that I will be watching over your tax dollars as diligently as you manage your household budget.

– END –

*Senator Gary Nodler represents the people of Newton, Jasper
and Dade counties in the Missouri Senate*