



# WEEKLY REPORT

State Senator Gary Nodler  
District 32



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

**Week of May 1, 2006**

## Budgeting for Vitality and Growth

---

JEFFERSON CITY – Each year, the General Assembly is charged with building upon the governor’s recommendations for how to spend taxpayer money and laying out a budget for the upcoming fiscal year. As the vice-chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee and a member of the bipartisan, dual-chamber conference committee, I was involved in coming up with a 13-bill fiscal package with which the House and Senate agree. The Legislature considered the appropriation bills throughout the week and passed a \$20.8 billion budget two days ahead of the May 5 deadline. This is only the third time since 1989 that lawmakers finished that early. Fortunately, the wise and responsible fiscal planning of last year paid off and has enabled us to once again make education our top priority while still valuing Missouri’s hardworking families.

Because of the many benefits of investing in public education, K-12 schools will receive \$127 million more than they are receiving during this current fiscal year, ending June 30. This increase will be put toward the phase-in cost of the new school funding formula that we rewrote last year. Of that money, the Small Schools Grant program will receive \$15 million. Among the various educational programs to receive significant funding increases are First Steps, Parents as Teachers, the A+ Program and special education. The public schools in the 32<sup>nd</sup> Senate District will receive more than \$87 million. The College View State School for the Severely Handicapped will receive \$844,178.

In another move that reaffirms our commitment to investing in quality education, the Legislature has approved a 2 percent increase in funding for Missouri’s public community colleges and four-year universities. Missouri Southern State University will receive \$21,614,003, and Crowder College has been allotted \$4,568,730.

As for other departments of state government, legislators approved for the Department of Transportation, an additional \$400 million to pay for road and bridge construction and maintenance.

-MORE-

The Department of Social Services has been slated to receive \$6.2 billion, which is a 4 percent increase over last year. For its first year, \$25 million will go toward the Healthcare Technology Fund, which will be used to bring Missouri’s health-care services into the 21st century by investing in electronic medical records, e-prescribing and telemedicine. The 2007 fiscal plan also calls for Missouri to spend at least \$200 million more on Medicaid this year, including \$6.7 million to cover wheelchair batteries and eyeglasses. I succeeded in adding an amendment to the budget for a 2.8 percent rate increase for Alcohol and Drug Abuse program providers and a 1.55 percent rate increase for Comprehensive Psychiatric Service providers. These programs had mistakenly been left out of a broader reimbursement increase for all mental health providers.

In other areas of state funding, to kick start our comprehensive state energy policy so we can ensure Missouri’s access to fuel, the budget allocates \$8.6 million for ethanol and \$5.25 million for biodiesel production. Lawmakers also recognized the hard work of Missouri state employees by authorizing a 4 percent pay raise across the board.

Here are several more appropriations that directly go toward the 32<sup>nd</sup> Senate District:

Battle of Carthage State Historical Site .....	\$	1,670
Joplin Innovation Center.....	\$	175,000
Joplin Regional Center.....	\$	2,259,423
Missouri Southern State University-Joplin Crime Lab.....	\$	212,060
Juvenile Court Personnel Reimbursement – Jasper County .....	\$	97,703

As my fellow lawmakers will agree, I am excited that this year’s budget season was one of optimism and growth. We have passed a fiscally responsible budget so we as a state can continue to live within our means. The governor must sign the budget before it goes into effect for Fiscal Year 2007, which begins July 1. The Second Regular Session of the 93rd General Assembly adjourns May 12. Any bills that are not passed by the time the General Assembly adjourns next Friday cannot be taken up again until next year. Our work as legislators, however, continues throughout the year. It is a distinct honor to be of service to the 32<sup>nd</sup> Senate District.

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