



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the
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Senate Approves House Bills in Special Session

Fast-Track Bridge Bill, Economic Development Package Approved

JEFFERSON CITY – The Missouri Senate advanced an economic development bill to the House and sent a bill to rebuild and maintain more than 800 Missouri bridges to the governor this week. Both bills, House Bill 1 and House Bill 2, respectively, were introduced during a special session called by the governor that got underway August 20.

The main provision of HB 1 is an expansion of the successful Quality Jobs Act, which has created more than 12,500 good-paying jobs with benefits in Missouri. Testimony this week before the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Tourism and Local Government indicates there are at least 3,000 new jobs pending approval of the expanded Quality Jobs Act. The legislation approved this week expands the cap on Quality Jobs from \$12 million to \$40 million.

A number of those new jobs would be created in the 28th Senatorial District. For example, an energy company has pledged to invest nearly \$7 million to build a new company headquarters and a fabrication plant in Sedalia, creating 207 new jobs, if the legislature expanded the Quality Jobs program. Another firm is considering locating a research technology company in Sedalia which would create 70-80 new positions. Also, a Kansas company is considering buying a vacant property in Sedalia to relocate to Missouri and proposes hiring up to 50 new employees by the fifth year in operation.

There are a number of other proposals on the drawing board at this time. Expanding the Quality Jobs Act makes Missouri a more attractive location for businesses seeking to expand or relocate.

HB 1 also creates a state match for the federal New Markets Tax Credit. The program enacted by Congress in 2000 authorizes billions of dollars to encourage investment in low-income areas throughout the country. The state incentives will leverage the federal credits, making Missouri more attractive to investors than other states, encouraging millions of dollars of venture capital to be invested in our state. All of the counties in the 28th District have areas that qualify for the New Market Tax Credit program. Practically any small to mid-sized business in a low-income community qualifies for this incentive-driven investment. Statewide, the program is projected to create nearly 6,000 new jobs and more than \$7 billion in economic activity in Missouri during the next 14 years.

Other notable provisions in HB 1 include tax credits to redevelop large, blighted sections in the city of St. Louis, a measure allowing consumers who want to resell tickets to sporting or entertainment events to do so at prices above face value, and a Qualified Beef Tax Credit to encourage Missouri cattle producers to keep and finish feeder calves in Missouri. An expert testified in committee that Missouri loses \$600 million per year in economic benefits by selling calves to operations in other states to be finished.

The House approved HB 1 with Senate amendments, sending the bill to the governor for his signature.

Lawmakers also approved and sent to the governor a bill that provides bonding language to allow the state to move forward with the maintenance and rebuilding of more than 800 Missouri bridges, many of which are located in the 28th District. I'll address that issue in more detail next week.

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.us.

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