



# WEEKLY REPORT

State Senator Gary Nodler  
District 32



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**Week of Jan. 22, 2007**

## **Bringing the State of the State Home**

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JEFFERSON CITY—State Senators joined members of the House of Representatives Wednesday night for Governor Matt Blunt’s third State of the State Address. The governor once again renewed his commitment to education and health care — both of which are at the top of my own personal legislative agenda. Economic uncertainty no longer ails this state. This new sense of security due to increased revenues and strong job growth allow us to continue fulfilling our promise to put Missouri families first.

As always, ensuring that our children receive a first-class education is an unflagging priority. Two years ago we welcomed change and revamped the way we fund public schools. Since then, funding for education has significantly increased each year. The governor was applauded this week by the Legislature for declaring that this trend will continue. He called for an additional \$214 million this year for Missouri schools, which would increase education funding by nearly a half a billion dollars since he was elected governor.

The governor also shares my opinion that education beyond high school is extremely important in solidifying our state’s future. This next year, we will look at reforming our system of higher education to increase college and university performance, increase access to higher education and make earning a degree more affordable for Missouri families.

Reforming our health-care system is also a clear priority. The governor laid out his plan for increasing access to affordable, high-quality health insurance for every Missourian. He proposed the Missouri HealthNet, an entirely new program that will replace Medicaid and focus on preventive care to avoid costly emergency room visits and unnecessary hospitalizations. The program will also be modernized, relying on technology instead of paper records. He also outlined his ideas for lowering the cost of insurance, providing incentives to small business to offer coverage, and pooling the purchasing power of the uninsured to get them the best benefits at the lowest cost. The state Legislature will be working hard this session to ensure that more Missourians than ever have health insurance.

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The governor also called on us to further develop a state energy policy, modernize and make safer our system of transportation and continue to be great stewards of taxpayer money. In general, the 2007 gubernatorial vision is in line with the aspirations of most lawmakers. With eager and willing leadership in Missouri, we are ready to meet and surpass the success of the past few years in 2007. Yet again, I look forward to working with my fellow lawmakers and the governor to guarantee that the state of the state remains healthy and promising.

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