



WEEKLY REPORT

State Senator Gary Nodler
District 32



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Week of May 7, 2007

Missouri's Budget

Many Appropriations to Directly Benefit the 32nd District

With this week drawing to a close, the Senate is left with one more week in session. There are plenty of priorities that I have addressed this session and I am satisfied with the progress that the General Assembly has made on issues like higher education. One priority every session is the budget, and, as the vice chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I am pleased to report that the budget will be completed balanced and on time. This final version of the state's spending plan will receive the governor's review and signature before becoming law.

Missouri's economy is prospering, and this is evident in the \$21.5 billion budget for fiscal year 2008, beginning on July 1, contained in House Bills 1-13. My colleagues and I are aware that this money does not belong to the government, but to the taxpayer, which is why the budget was crafted in a fiscally responsible manner featuring sensible increases to programs and services used by Missourians.

Higher education will receive a 6.5 percent increase for a total appropriation of \$936 million. Within these funds are specific projects in the 32nd District. Crowder College will receive \$4.7 million in funding and Missouri Southern State University (MSSU) will receive \$23.5 million. MSSU will also benefit from \$334,000 for a collaborative dental hygiene distance education program.

Elementary and secondary education will receive a 3.8 percent increase for a total appropriation of \$2.8 billion. Two years ago, the state began to use a new funding formula in order to appropriate money to local school districts based on student need, not property value. The plan is being phased in over the next six years. This year, \$92.7 million of Foundation Formula funding will go to schools in the 32nd District.

The growth of Missouri's economy is due to the hard work of its residents, and the government can help encourage this expansion. The Department of Economic Development will receive a significant 46.4 percent increase bringing the total funding to \$64.3 million. Businesses in and around Joplin will directly benefit from this increase with \$275,000 going to the newly opened Joseph Newman Innovation Center. This center serves as a tool for entrepreneurs who want to develop their business.

Other projects that will benefit from the budget include \$712,754 for College View State School for the Severely Handicapped, \$3,076 for the Battle of Carthage State Historical Site, and \$2.3 million for Joplin Regional Center. Another exciting opportunity for the area comes from \$610,834 to go towards the Joplin Crime Lab on the MSSU campus. These projects will create new and exciting opportunities throughout Southwest Missouri.

The budget is a task that we are constitutionally charged to create each year and is a duty we take seriously. The state spending plan decides where your money goes, and I assure you that it is going to places that will benefit the people of the 32nd District and all Missourians. These appropriations are in addition to the funding discussed last week through the Lewis and Clark Discovery Initiative totaling \$150 million for the 32nd District.

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