



WEEKLY REPORT

State Senator Gary Nodler
District 32



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Week of May 5, 2008

Missouri's Budget

Appropriations to Benefit Communities in Southwest Missouri

One priority we are constitutionally obligated to address every session is the budget, and, as chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I am pleased to report that the budget has been completed on time and with fiscal responsibility. This includes the 13 bills that provide for state programs and services as well as funding for capital improvements. This final version of the state's spending plan will receive the governor's review and signature before becoming law.

Higher education receives a 7.8 percent increase for a total appropriation of \$1.2 billion. The 32nd Senate District's higher education institutions will directly benefit from this funding. Crowder College is a quickly expanding community college which is known throughout the nation for its alternative energy program. Crowder College will receive \$4.9 million in funding. Missouri Southern State University (MSSU) will receive \$25.6 million. MSSU will also benefit from \$450,000 towards the collaborative dental hygiene distance education program. This distance education opportunity allows students to earn an associate degree in dental hygiene. The program offers classes and correspondence through interactive television, the Internet and clinical sites in Rolla and Sikeston, allowing more students to access this educational possibility.

Elementary and secondary education receives a 2.4 percent increase for a total appropriation of \$5.3 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 through the next six years. This year, \$128.5 million of Foundation Formula funding will go to schools in the 32nd District.

Additional projects for the 32nd District will improve our community. A total of \$625,000 will go towards the Missouri Power Resource Center, a facility that will partner with EaglePicher Technologies LLC in Joplin to focus on cutting-edge technology related to power and next generation batteries. The Highway Patrol Crime Lab in the area will be moving from Joplin to Carthage and \$1 million will contribute to the renovation of the new facility. The Joplin Innovation Center, which helps new businesses

in the area get started, will receive \$275,000. An additional \$2 million will go towards a dual-use storm shelter at MSSU. This building will provide locker rooms and offices for the university, but will also be available to student athletes and coaches to use as a shelter in case of severe weather. These projects will create new and exciting opportunities throughout Southwest Missouri.

The 2009 fiscal year budget will go into effect on July 1. I assure you that taxpayer dollars are going to places that will benefit the people of the 32nd District and all Missourians.

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