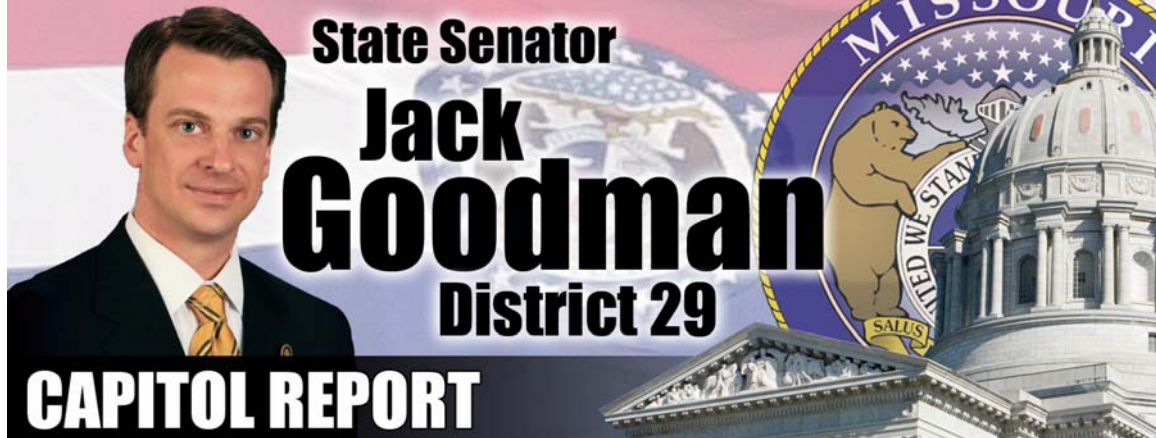


Week of September 7, 2009



Senator Jack Goodman – Serving Barry, Lawrence, McDonald, Ozark, Stone and Taney Counties

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[Economic Development that Works](#)

This week the Governor kicked off his conference on economic development in St. Louis. Every year, this conference is held to bring economic development and business community leaders together from around the state, and to recognize the outstanding achievements individuals have made to the state's economic well-being. With unemployment creeping to 10 percent, it does not take long to look around and see the tremendous need for a revitalized approach to economic development. Nearly everyone has been personally affected by the recent economic downturn or knows someone who is out of work and struggling to make ends meet.

Missouri has a strong and well-diversified economy. Manufacturing, agriculture and healthcare make substantial contributions to the gross domestic product of our state, but there is one area of economic activity that often gets overlooked — tourism. The 2007 Missouri Economic Report estimated that tourism created more than \$8 billion of total economic activity and employed nearly 300,000 people in the State of Missouri. By anybody's standards that represents a huge part of our economy.

It is clear that tourism works for Missouri, which is why so many of us were shocked when the Governor withheld \$7 million from the state Tourism Commission's \$24 million budget. These funds are invested wisely by the Tourism Commission to advertise and promote all parts of Missouri — and it's effective. Every dollar spent on tourism advertising creates a \$48 return for Missouri's economy. Just to illustrate this impact, it has been estimated that every year more than seven million people come to Branson alone to spend their hard-

earned dollars on family vacations and getaways. Of these, 47 percent come from more than 300 miles away! Many of these are out-of-state visitors who would probably not have made the decision to vacation in Missouri without seeing an advertisement.

I applaud the Governor for his dedication to hosting a conference designed to promote Missouri's economic well-being. But all the conferences in the world will not solve a backward approach to economic development. Government should promote job growth by eliminating unnecessary regulatory burdens, reducing taxes, and *promoting a good business environment*. In Missouri, that means taking every opportunity to tell people all the great reasons to visit our state (and spend money while they are here). That's why cutting more than 30 percent from tourism funding directly and negatively affects the families, small businesses, and regional employers that depend on the Tourism Commission to market our state.

Governor Nixon should begin his approach to economic development by sticking with what works. Funding withheld from the Missouri Tourism Commission should be restored immediately so the economy of Southwest Missouri can continue to be a vital part of the economic engine that keeps Missourians working.

As always, I welcome your ideas, questions and concerns about Missouri government. You may contact me at the Capitol as follows: (573) 751-2234, jack.goodman@senate.mo.gov or by writing to Senator Jack Goodman, Missouri State Capitol, Room 331-A, Jefferson City, MO 65101.

Contact Information

Capitol Office
State Capitol Building
Room 331-A
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Website:
<http://www.senate.mo.gov/goodman>

Phone Number:
573.751.2234 (Capitol)
417.466.3731 (District)

Fax:
573.526.9808