

*Nothing is politically right
that is morally wrong.*



*Free and fair discussion
is the firmest friend of truth.*

MISSOURI SENATE JEFFERSON CITY

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Senate Leader Names New Appropriations Chairman *Sen. Rob Mayer to Lead Senate in Budget Process*

JEFFERSON CITY –Senate Leader Charlie Shields, R-St. Joseph, today announced that he will appoint Sen. Rob Mayer, R-Dexter, as the new chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, the standing committee that drafts the state's annual budget. Mayer will assume the chairmanship on Dec. 1.

"In light of Sen. Nodler's resignation as chairman, I am appointing Sen. Rob Mayer as chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee," said Shields. "Rob is an experienced leader when it comes to the budget process and I have no doubt that he will build upon the bipartisan tradition of this important committee, as they work to protect taxpayers and pay for the critical functions of state government in these difficult financial times."

Mayer will head the committee that meets regularly during the legislative session to discuss and craft the state's spending plan, which is constitutionally due each year. Mayer began serving on the appropriations committee in 2004 and was appointed as vice chair of the committee in 2007.

"I consider it an honor to be named as chairman and appreciate Sen. Shields' trust in my understanding of the challenges the state faces in preparing a budget this year, and in the coming years," said Mayer. "I will miss working with Sen. Nodler, whose good work and leadership during his tenure allowed us to shape budgets that protected Missouri taxpayers. I look forward to working with my colleagues and the professional staff and hope to continue the bipartisan spirit of the committee as we work to craft a budget taxpayers can afford that still provides for the critical state government programs that benefit Missourians, especially those in need."

Current Appropriations Chairman Sen. Gary Nodler, R-Joplin, noted Mayer is well prepared to take the lead on the committee, commenting that Mayer has participated in all aspects of the committee chair's roles, including management meetings.

"Rob has been an equal partner in the appropriations process," Nodler said. "He is both prepared and has the characteristics to be a strong leader when it comes to the budget during these difficult financial times."

The budget process begins with public hearings in order to hear testimony on the state's finances. The committee's public hearings on the budget begin December 7, 2009. The budget bills are proposed by the House Budget Committee and must be approved by the House before advancing to the Senate. The Senate Appropriations Committee works independently from the House to develop its own recommended spending plan. They amend the House budget plan to reflect the Senate spending plan. Once approved by the Senate, differences are ironed out through the conference committee process. As chairman, Mayer would be one of five senators to serve on every budget related conference committee. Once the House and Senate agree on a final plan, it is sent to the governor. The General Assembly's constitutional deadline for completion of the state operating budget is one week before the constitutional end of the legislative session.

As Senate Leader, Shields is tasked with naming all committee chairmen.

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