

*Nothing is politically right
that is morally wrong.*



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

MISSOURI SENATE JEFFERSON CITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 1, 2009

Senate Leader Names New Appropriations Vice-Chair *Plus Announces New Member of Budget Committee*

JEFFERSON CITY –Senate Leader Charlie Shields, R-St. Joseph, today announced the appointments of Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, as the new vice-chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee and Sen. Jim Lembke, R-St. Louis, as the newest member of the standing committee that drafts the state's annual budget. Both appointments are effective today, Dec. 1.

"Traditionally, senators from the 19th District have been leaders in the budget process and I am continuing that tradition by entrusting Kurt with the duties of vice-chair," Sen. Shields said. "Kurt is a dynamic new senator who will have the opportunity to shape our budget priorities and shift us to more long-term budget thinking in the years to come."

As vice-chair, Sen. Schaefer would traditionally 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.

"I appreciate Sen. Shields' faith in my abilities to serve as vice-chair," Sen. Schaefer said. "I also look forward to working side-by-side with Sen. Mayer as we work to continue to pay for the critical functions of government during this budget crisis without causing long-term negative effects to the quality of life and services Missourians have come to expect."

Senator Shields cited Sen. Lembke's experience as a leader in the budget process when he served in the House as a reason for his appointment to the committee.

"Jim brings sound judgment based on years of budget experience in the House, making him an asset to the Senate's Committee in these tough financial times," said Sen. Shields.

Senator Rob Mayer, R-Dexter, was named last month to head the committee after Sen. Gary Nodler, R-Joplin, stepped down from the post. The committee meets regularly during the legislative session to discuss and craft the state's spending plan, which is constitutionally due each year.

"I look forward to working with Chairman Sen. Mayer and the other committee members in setting the state's priorities and being a good steward of the people's tax dollars," said Sen. Lembke. "Unlike the federal government, we can't print money or borrow from China — we have a Constitutional mandate to not spend more than we have and I am committed to continuing the tradition of passing a balanced budget."

The budget process begins with public hearings on the state's finances. Those are scheduled to begin December 7. Budget bills are first proposed by the House Budget Committee and then must be approved by the House. 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 in conference committees. The General Assembly's constitutional deadline for completion of the state operating budget is one week before the constitutional end of the legislative session.

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