



View from the Chair

Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission

Thank you, Joe Carmichael!

March 5, 2014



Dear «GreetingLine»

Today I presided over my first meeting of the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission as its chairman. I have served on the commission since August of 2009, and for the past year I was the MHTC's vice chairman.

I plan to distribute this newsletter to key stakeholders following each MHTC meeting to inform you on the important issues we face.

- We all owe former MHTC Chairman Joe Carmichael a great deal of thanks for his leadership and service to Missouri! Joe did a tremendous job leading us the past year with a steady hand and a certain understated manner that allowed the commission to navigate some difficult issues: our transition to a new MoDOT management team, continued implementation of the "Bolder Five Year Direction," possibilities for getting a funding proposal before the Missouri voters, changes to our health care and retirement programs, and the financial forecast that forced us to make the tough decision to stop adding projects to our five-year construction program and to suspend the cost-share program.
- House Joint Resolution 68 passed the Rules Committee on February 20, and House Speaker Tim Jones has placed it on the calendar for floor consideration. HJR68 would give Missourians the chance to vote for a temporary one-cent sales tax for transportation that over 10 years would generate additional revenues to enable MoDOT, cities and counties to deliver projects that make Missourians safer, create jobs and improve our quality of life.
- We heard a report today from State Bridge Engineer Dennis Heckman that is alarming. Despite the tremendous strides we made with the Safe & Sound Bridge Improvement Program and other projects from 2009-12; reducing our number of deficient bridges by

nearly 800, we'll soon see those numbers start to climb. That's because with our volume of bridges and their age, about 100 fall into that category each year. With construction funding falling, it will be impossible to do all of the bridge projects we need to do and it's very possible that we may be forced to close some bridges in the future.

- State Design Engineer Eric Schroeter told us MoDOT won't hold a letting in April, because only \$200 million remains to award this fiscal year, and several big jobs account for most of that. The contracts we awarded today were almost all projects to take care of the system. Additionally, we have paid out \$106 million less to contractors than we had at this point a year ago. That's not good news, neither for our partners in the construction industry nor for our state's transportation system, but it is a sign of the times. We need to find a solution to these transportation funding problems.
- Finally, we were all touched during public comment by the words of appreciation from Shawn Archambault, whose non-profit organization – "One Curve at a Time" – honors his daughter, Kaela, who died in a crash on Route FF in Jefferson County in 2010. The emotion he exhibited humanizes our work and makes us want to do more – fix dangerous curves, add shoulders and guard cable – but our lack of funding is not abstract. It truly limits what we want to and need to do.
- If you would like to communicate with the Commission, you can always reach us at MHTC@modot.mo.gov.

Safe travels!

Stephen R. Miller
Chairman

Please forward this e-mail to anyone interested in Missouri transportation news.

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