



View from the Chair

Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission

Regions Begin Prioritizing Projects for New Revenue Stream

May 23, 2014



Dear «GreetingLine»

It's been a week now since the General Assembly approved House Joint Resolution 68, sending it to a public vote in the November election, and a week since the Commission's last meeting. That's given me some time to think back about what occurred at last week's Commission meeting, and we had significant business outside of the progress at the Capitol. Consider:

- We know that the failure to invest in transportation has an impact on jobs and the economic health of our state. Ironically, while the Legislature and others were hard at work to pass HJR68, the Commission was touring the new St. Mary's Health Center in Jefferson City, a shining example of what a transportation project can do. St. Mary's is a beautiful state-of-the-art hospital with a 435,000 square-foot complex on 100 acres. It was made possible by a cost-share between the local community (\$10 million) and MoDOT (\$10 million) that build the Route 179/Mission Drive interchange creating access to the site. The \$218 million hospital brought investment from outside the region, and created more than one million construction labor hours, 70 percent of which went to local Central Missouri workers. Other development at the interchange – including a new high school – is on the horizon for the area.
- You may remember that because of uncertain future funding, the Commission suspended the cost-share program in January. Projects like this one in Jefferson City are no longer happening around the state. Your support of giving Missourians the chance to vote to invest in transportation improvements that fuel this kind of economic activity in communities

throughout the state is appreciated. With additional transportation revenues, the MHTC has every intention of reinstating the popular cost-share program.

- MoDOT's Fiscal Year 2015 budget was previewed at our May meeting. The \$2.2 billion budget will be finalized and approved in June. A few striking budget facts:
 - The 17-cent gas tax collected in 1996 is worth only 8 cents today.
 - The federal highway trust fund will be insolvent by late July requiring Congress to prop it up with general revenue.
 - We expect a 19 percent drop in federal transportation funding to Missouri.
- Also at last week's meeting, we were presented a draft Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). In a normal year, we add 300-500 new projects to the rolling five-year construction program. Because of where our funding is headed, this year we added 25 (11 for safety, 11 previously approved cost-shares and three funded by others). Our normal practice has been to fully program the first three years and program years four-five at 50 percent. This year, only years one-two are fully programmed.
- Now that we know a transportation funding proposal will be on the November ballot, regional efforts are increasing to produce a list of priority projects and programs that would be funded with the new revenue. During the month of June, those regional plans will come together. A draft list of projects will be presented to the MHTC in August. Following a public comment period, final approval will be given in September. In this manner, voters will clearly see what will be delivered with the new revenues for transportation.
- I encourage you to be involved in the regional project discussions, and let us know what you think about the prioritized projects.
- 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

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