



View from the Chair

Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission

MHTC Goes on the Road Again To Hear from Missourians

September 15, 2014



Dear «GreetingLine»

The Commission met last Wednesday in St. Joseph – our first meeting of the year away from Jefferson City. We enjoy taking our “show on the road” because every community in this state has different transportation needs. It’s important to hear those views and also for us to build relationships with local citizens.

Our next three meetings will be held October 15 in St. Louis; November 6 in Springfield; and December 4 in Kansas City.

We are delighted to welcome a new member to the Commission - Bryan Scott, director of quality at The Boeing Company in St. Louis. Bryan was reappointed to the commission by Governor Nixon on Sept. 4. We regret he was unable to join us in St. Joseph, but we look forward to working with him and benefiting from his perspective and insight.

I was struck by a couple of things that MoDOT Director Dave Nichols reported to us. First, he announced that Friday, Sept. 12, marked the opening of an important project that built a new four-lane U.S. Route 50 in Osage County from the U.S. Route 50/63 interchange to just west of Linn. This project will greatly improve safety in the area. This reminds us of the important projects we have been able to accomplish with our previous funding and that we will not enjoy in the future without new funding.

Dave also told us about three bridges in Kansas City, St. Louis and southeast Missouri’s Dunklin County that had to be closed recently because of deteriorating conditions.

These two occurrences – bringing Route 50 6.6 miles closer to being a four-lane highway across the state and closing bridges – are an odd contrast, to say the least. But given declining funding for transportation in Missouri, we are going to see very few, if any, of the Route 50-type projects in the future. And we are likely to see an increase in the number of bridges we close or restrict.

The needs are not going to go away. With last month's defeat of Constitutional Amendment 7, which would have increased the state sales tax to fund transportation projects, we must keep searching for an answer to our transportation funding problems that Missourians will embrace.

We are keenly aware of the challenge ahead and, far from being discouraged, we are committed to continuing to explore ways to fund transportation. We have already begun examining all possible options. There will be no grand plan along the lines of Amendment 7, but there are still options available – small bites of the apple. We are dedicated to addressing this problem any way we need to – one bite at a time.

If you would like to communicate with the Commission, you can always reach us at MHTC@modot.mo.gov.

Onward!

Stephen R. Miller
Chairman

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