



# View from the Chair

Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission

## Like Baseball, Transportation Improves Our Quality of Life

October 17, 2014



Dear «GreetingLine»

Whether wearing Royal Blue or Cardinal Red, Missourians have spent the last few weeks reveling in the playoff success of their major league baseball teams. Never was that more evident than the atmosphere in downtown St. Louis where the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission met Wednesday. Though the Cardinals were playing in San Francisco, it seemed that everywhere you turned, people were wearing their Cardinals attire and businesses were adorned with Cardinal memorabilia.

I can attest, it's the same with the Royals in Kansas City. And just to let you know how passionate I am about our transportation issues, I gave up tickets to the Royals' Tuesday night game (won by KC, 2-1) to spend the evening in St. Louis discussing transportation with St. Louis business leaders on the eve of the Commission's public meeting.

As America's pastime, baseball is one of those things that contributes to our quality of life. It's where generations of American families have built a special bond with each other, their heroes and their communities. Cultural historian Jacques Barzun once said, "Whoever wants to know the heart and mind of America had better learn baseball."

Transportation, too, contributes to our quality of life. It offers us mobility and connectivity, allows our economy to thrive and expands our horizons. But when we look down the road, we see a transportation budget that is heading toward a level that won't even support the maintenance of our system. Our roads and bridges will gradually begin to deteriorate, and we will be unable to invest in projects that improve safety, boost the economy and create jobs. That is why it's so

important that we continue to work with our elected officials and partners to determine funding solutions that Missourians will embrace.

Joe Reagan, president and CEO of the St. Louis Regional Chamber, echoed these concerns about the severe decline in funding for transportation. He noted that the recent failure of Constitutional Amendment 7 and stalled federal funding will have a negative impact on the St. Louis region's business climate.

We also heard from Hazel Erby, St. Louis County Council chair and District 1 councilwoman, who discussed the lack of economic opportunities as one of the underlying causes for the unrest in Ferguson and discontent in North St. Louis County. Transportation investment brings opportunity. Even with our limited resources, MoDOT will continue to look for ways to reach out to the disadvantaged in various parts of our state.

Inadequate funding for state resources also surfaced as a concern when we recently polled MoDOT employees to determine their engagement and satisfaction with their work. MoDOT employees have not had a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for a number of years while at the same time we have asked every employee to compete for a position and have reduced the workforce by more than 1,200 employees. Not surprisingly this is reflected in our survey.

Employee-driven teams have been formed to make recommendations in four areas: salaries and benefits, use of resources, promotion, and leadership and communication. The Commission will be very interested to hear the results of those discussions, as we are dedicated to providing the best possible environment for our employees - our greatest asset.

If you would like to communicate with the Commission, you can always reach us at [MHTC@modot.mo.gov](mailto:MHTC@modot.mo.gov). In the meantime, Go Royals!

Onward!

Stephen R. Miller  
Chairman

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

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