

Legislative Bulletin



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2013 Legislative Session Gets Underway

The ringing in of the New Year and the beginning of a new legislative session go hand in hand. On January 9th the 2013 session got underway with many new faces and many legislators taking on new roles. Two new Transportation Committee chairs will take the helm this session. In the Senate, Sen. Mike Kehoe from Jefferson City will chair the committee, although not totally new to transportation issues. He was vice chair of the committee last session and, before being elected to the Missouri General Assembly, Sen. Kehoe served as a commissioner on the Missouri Highway Commission. On the House side, Rep. Dave Schatz will take the reins of the Transportation Committee. He too has some background in transportation as his business in Franklin County has commercial vehicles, so he understands the regulatory burden the industry faces.

The elections last fall left us with some interesting dynamics for this new General Assembly. On the House side, the Republicans have a 109 to 52 advantage, and in the Senate, the breakdown is 24 to 10 with the Republicans having the advantage. The significance of these numbers is that, if the Republicans can hold their group together, then they have the votes to override any veto by the Governor. This is a position of great power for the Republicans, but on key issues in the past they have had a hard time keeping everyone in concert. A couple of other interesting facts - there are 22 attorneys in the House and 5 in the Senate and the freshman class is 55 in the House and 12 in the Senate.

As the session gets going the one main transportation issue that continues to percolate to the top is "How do we solve Missouri's highway funding shortfall?" No bills have been filed, but the two most talked about proposals would be: a billion dollar bonding program or a 1 cent sales tax dedicated to transportation. Both ideas are welcomed by the trucking industry, but only the 1 cent sales tax offers a long-term solution. Either of these ideas, if passed by the General Assembly, would still need to be put on the ballot and be approved by the citizens of Missouri. The Missouri Trucking Association will join with many in the business community to work on employment issues, including workers comp, unemployment comp, tort reform and second injury fund.

The first couple of weeks have been spent getting to know the new legislators and educating them on the trucking industry and issues of importance to the Missouri Trucking Association. More information on specific bills will come in the following weeks. Become involved - it will pay real dividends! The "24 Hours in Jefferson City" is an easy way to do that . . . all you have to do is show up. MoTA staff will set up meetings and a dinner to introduce you to your local legislators as well as leaders in transportation. Contact the MoTA office if you would like to join us in Jeff City.