

The **Association** report

from the **Capitol**

April 16, 2015

MoDOT would receive some additional funding beginning next January (2016) if a bill debated Tuesday in the senate (4-14-15) were to be passed and signed into law by the governor. SB540, sponsored by Sen. Doug Libla of Poplar Bluff, proposes to raise the per gallon gas tax 2 cents to 19 cents a gallon.

Although the bill was debated for several hours a vote was not taken and further work on the measure was postponed to an undetermined later date. Several senators spoke in favor of SB540 with stories of bridge closures and reduced weight limits in their home districts. Sen. Libla said it just makes good business sense for Missouri to do the maintenance and repairs on its considerable transportation infrastructure. He also pointed out to his colleagues that MoDOT is nearing a point where it would no longer have the money on hand to offer as a match for federal transportation dollars. The 2-cent increase would cover the state match required, at least for the time being, he explained.

While the proposal seemed to have reasonably strong support among senators, there was some concern that any tax increase should go to a vote of the people. The bill is expected to be brought up for debate again in the next week or two.

Another bill of interest, sometimes referred to as a state employee early retirement incentive, was "perfected" (given preliminary approval) in the house on Tuesday. HB1134 would allow a new retiree to continue state health insurance for five years at the same cost as an active employee. Another provision of the bill requires the employee to retire Between Mar. 1, 2015 and Nov. 1, 2015 to be eligible for the benefit.

The current legislative session is scheduled to end at 6 p.m. on Friday, May 15.

**From Harry Hill, Lobbyist
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