

The **Association** report

from the **Capitol**

April 30, 2015

The 2015 Missouri legislative session is winding down and a number of issues of concern to our Association are still pending. This does not include state employee pay raises or a resumption of a state contribution to the deferred compensation plan.

The 2016 budget was completed and sent to the governor on April 23rd, a couple of weeks earlier than usual. There was talk of pay raises but it went no further than that. One thing was clearly apparent - money is tight. While many areas of state government are to receive at least stable funding, some programs in health and social services were reduced by 4%.

The state needs to raise some revenue. And nowhere is it more evident than MoDOT. Some legislators, however, continue to ignore the obvious needs of the state. MoDOT is perilously close to losing federal highway money. Yet on April 22nd, the House Transportation Committee defeated a 2-cents a gallon gas tax increase (HB995.) A similar bill in the senate was blocked by a filibuster.

On a more positive note, two house bills which could be beneficial to state workers have passed the house and were heard Tuesday (Apr. 28) in the Senate General Laws Committee. They are HB1134, which would allow state employees who are eligible to retire at a specific time to continue state health insurance for 5 years at the same rate as when they retired. The second bill, HB1087, would increase the statutory ceiling for the state's contribution for each employee from \$75 to \$100 monthly. I testified in favor of the two bills which were sponsored by Rep. Mike Bernskoetter of Jefferson City.

The legislative session is scheduled to end at 6 p.m. May 15th.

**From Harry Hill, Lobbyist
Transportation Employees' Association of Missouri**