

The **Association** report

from the **Capitol**

January 4, 2007

Beginning at noon on Wednesday (Jan.3), recently-elected men and women from around the state were officially “sworn in” at the state capitol to initiate Missouri's annual legislative session. This year’s class of new legislators is relatively large, due in part to term limits. There are 28 new house members and five new senators. Three of the new senators have served previously in the house.

State revenue is fairly robust this year which is expected to translate into pay raises for state employees in the 3 to 4% range. There have also been some early discussions about the possibility of the state increasing its contribution to the state employee deferred compensation program. Statutory authority for an increase in the deferred compensation program was passed several years ago. A lean state budget, however, has kept the state’s actual contribution from moving up.

The pre-filing of legislative proposals has been on going since the first of December. Our Association has had a hand in some of those bills that have been pre-filed and others that are being prepared for introduction during the regular session. Sen. Rob Mayer has again introduced a bill that would allow members of the MoDOT and Highway Patrol Retirement system to buy at a reduced rate retirement credit for prior (non federal) public employee service. This bill is SB127. A similar bill is expected to be introduced soon in the house.

Other bills pre-filed which could be of interest to our Association as well as MoDOT include;

HB90 – An expanded required use of safety belts - by Rep. Neal St. Onge.

HB89 – “Travel Safe Zones” being designated where a higher than average number of traffic accidents have occurred - also by Rep St. Onge.

SB26 – Would allow MoDOT to operate toll roads - by Sen. Matt Bartle

**From Harry Hill, Lobbyist
Missouri Highway and Transportation Employees' Association**