

The **Association** report

from the **Capitol**

February 5, 2010

The State's match for deferred compensation, raised in 2008 to \$35 a month, may be coming to an end. Gov. Nixon announced Tuesday (Feb. 2) that the deferred comp program would be part of additional budget cuts amounting to nearly \$74 million. It is believed the state could stop contributing its match to the fund as early as March 1 of this year.

The deferred comp benefit is something our Association has expended considerable time and effort to promote and expand. It essentially was through our concentrated work that the state's contribution was increased a couple of years ago. It has been suggested that this recommended cut may be reversed if enough state employees, including our Association members, contact the governor's office as well as their state legislators. More than 38,000 state employees participate in the deferred compensation program.

On Wednesday, (Feb. 3) some of our members, including Association President Archie Daily, were in the Capitol for Transportation Day which had been planned for several months. The timing couldn't have been better because it gave us a convenient opportunity to visit with key legislators about the proposed closing of credit union offices in each of the district offices. We were able to meet with Rep. Mike Parson, Sen. Delbert Scott and Sen. Bill Stouffer. Our requests for help to keep the credit union offices where they are now were met by varied responses.

Both Rep. Parson and Sen. Scott recommended we encourage our members to contact their home-area legislators to voice their concerns. Further meetings on the credit union issue are being discussed and are expected to be held soon in the capital city.

In the legislative arena, a bill to prohibit texting while driving was heard last week in a senate committee. Sen. Ryan McKenna is sponsoring SB701 which would make it against the law for persons of any age to text message while driving. Current law prohibits only persons 21 and younger from texting while driving.

Our Association presented testimony at the Senate Transportation Committee hearing about the vastly increased danger to our employees when drivers in work zones are distracted while attempting to use texting devices. Similar bills have been introduced in the house.

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