

Missouri Travel Council Legislative Update - 3/28/08

From Dale Amick

The Missouri House has passed a proposed new state budget that includes a three-million-dollar increase in funding for the Division of Tourism.

The House spent all this past week passing its 23-billion-dollar budget blueprint. That version now goes to the Senate Appropriations Committee for consideration. The legislature must pass a new state budget by May 9.

The House budget allots 23.5 million dollars to the Division of Tourism, three million dollars above its current funding level. The figure, however, is one million dollars below the recommendation made by Gov. Matt Blunt in his budget proposal.

The current session is much slower than sessions in recent memory. Fewer bills are in position for final passage than in recent years. The session ends May 16.

Legislation (SB 765) to basically repeal language passed last year making it easier to form a village in Missouri has passed the Senate and is awaiting action in the House.

Legislation to authorize cities and counties to increase transient guest taxes from a maximum of five cents to eight cents is dead for this session.

As everyone knows, Blaine Luetkemeyer has resigned as director of the Division of Tourism to run for Congress. Blaine has done an excellent job as tourism director, guiding the agency to its highest funding levels in its history. It is a credit to Blaine and his staff that even during an economic downturn, tourism has increased in Missouri. We all will miss Blaine's leadership and skills in the tourism and travel industry.