

The 2009 legislative session is over, and I would like to take a moment to thank each of you for the time you devoted to speaking with your legislators the past few months. Without your willingness to take time from your jobs to remind legislators of the important role that Tourism plays in Missouri's economy, the past session would not have been a success.

With a new governor and new legislative leadership, we knew going into this session that it might be difficult. The fact that lawmakers in both parties recognize the vital role this industry plays is a testament to efforts you have put forth. And the fact that Tourism was one of the few programs that was not cut this year is a testament to their commitment to foster continued growth.

Legislative lobbying is about relationship building. Efforts are far more successful when a legislator sees you as a constituent-a voter-rather than a nameless face in the Capitol. Over the coming summer and fall, I would challenge each of you to make contact with your legislator in his-and your-hometown or at a local function. It is always nice for them to hear from you when you're NOT asking for something.

I would also like to take a special moment to thank MTC's legislative consultant, Dale Amick. Few people understand how much time he spends at the Capitol and away from his own family between the months of January and May. Thanks also goes to Bob Smith and Bob Hain at the Missouri Division of Tourism for the cooperation and information they provide on a daily basis.

Have a great summer!