

MISSOURI TRAVEL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE REPORT

From: Dale Amick 2/12/09

As the federal stimulus package nears completion in Congress, movement is heating up in the State Capitol to position potential infrastructure projects for the federal funding.

Budget staffers at the Capitol are unsure of what is in the stimulus package for states, much less what restrictions may be placed on how to spend the money.

Gov. Jay Nixon is counting on some 800 million dollars of the federal stimulus money to help balance the new state budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1. Republican legislative leaders are opposed to using this "one-time" money for substantial, long-term funding of state programs and services. This debate should heat up as the stimulus money filters down from Washington.

This debate could affect the budget level for the Division of Tourism. Without using substantial federal stimulus money to balance the new state budget, significant cuts in essential state programs or services may be necessary.

The governor has proposed leaving the Division of Tourism budget at its current level. Few programs in his proposed budget had that distinction. But the budget writing process in the legislature is long and the agency's proposed budget could be a target of legislators wanting general revenue for programs or services they deem more important.