

Missouri Travel Council Legislative Report

From: Dale Amick 4/23/09

A joint Senate-House Conference Committee will begin drafting a final state budget blueprint this coming week. The legislature must approve a budget plan by May 8.

The Senate has approved \$23.7 million budget for the Division of Tourism, the same budget level as this year. The House adopted a \$20.6 million budget level for the Division.

Meanwhile, the House this coming week will begin deliberations on its spending plan for up to two billion dollars in federal stimulus and stabilization money sent from Congress. That plan will be part of any final budget blueprint drafted by the legislature. The Senate included some of this money in its regular budget proposal.

The governor's economic development program has stalled in the Senate. Several senators object to more use of state tax credits in future economic development initiatives.

The House this week passed a sweeping tax reform plan that eliminates the state income tax and replaces it with additional sales tax. The proposed constitutional amendment also eliminates many sales tax exemptions. The Senate is not expected to push the plan.

Meanwhile, the House also passed a cut in the state income tax for those with incomes under \$50,000, along with additional federal tax exemption levels for all taxpayers.

The 2009 legislative session ends May 15.