

## MISSOURI TRAVEL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE REPORT

From: Dale Amick 3/13/09

The Missouri House Budget Committee has approved a proposed new budget for the Division of Tourism that is about \$5.2 million short of the agency's current funding level.

Governor Jay Nixon had recommended \$23.7 million for the Division, the same budget level as this year. However, House Budget chairman Allen Ictet cut that figure by \$6 million. Ictet and his committee restored about \$800,000 back into the Division's budget this week, still leaving about a \$5.2 million shortfall from the current Division budget level.

The full House will consider the committee's budget recommendations beginning March 23. Then the budget blueprint goes to the Senate for further consideration.

There is movement to determine whether to use federal stimulus funding to fill the shortfall in the Division's budget. Rep. Steve Hobbs of Mexico and Rep. Dennis Woods of Branson are working to restore full funding to the Division's budget. Hobbs, a member of the House Budget Committee, emphasized to the committee how important tourism is to the state and that now is not the time to cut the Division's budget.

MTC members should contact their state representative about how important full funding for the Division is to maintain tourism dollars flowing into the state treasury and keeping jobs and economic activity in Missouri.