

Missouri Travel Council Legislative Update

From: Dale Amick 4/29/10

The Missouri Legislature has passed and sent to the governor a \$13.5 million budget for the Division of Tourism.

The governor had recommended \$20.4 million for the Division. The House recommended \$19.4 million, but the Senate cut that figure to \$13.5 million.

Due to an ever-quickenning, sharp downturn in state revenue, the Senate was forced to cut one half billion dollars from the House-approved state budget in order to make sure it was a balanced budget.

Few changes were made in that Senate version in the joint Senate/House conference committee last week. Both bodies approved the conference committee version with little discussion.

In the Senate, Sen. Frank Barnitz said on the floor it was a mistake to cut Tourism because of its return on state investment of \$2.50 in state revenue for every one state dollar put into advertising. Sen. Rob Mayer, the Senate Appropriations Committee, said it was a choice to cut either Tourism or education.

Mayer maintained cutting the Tourism budget to \$13.5 million will still preserve the co-op program intact with no cuts whatsoever. Barnitz said the low Tourism budget figure could result in a slashing of the popular co-op advertising program.