

Missouri Travel Council Legislative Update

From Dale Amick 1/15/10

Writing a new state budget is the highlighted issue of the 2010 Missouri legislative session now underway in Jefferson City.

Gov. Jay Nixon has cut the current state budget by about 640 million dollars, including millions from the Division of Tourism budget. Shortfalls continue so the governor is expected to cut another 200 million dollars from the budget soon.

The governor will deliver his new budget recommendations in a speech to a joint session of the Missouri Legislature January 20. Look for up to 20 per cent spending cuts in many state programs and services.

Incoming state revenue remains alarmingly below last year's levels with no relief in sight. Unemployment remains at 10 per cent and the state continues to lose jobs.

Economic development initiatives will be on the legislative front burner, but the fact is states are limited in what they can do to stem the tide of a nationwide recession. The state's auto industry is in shambles and the agricultural sector is experiencing low commodity prices. Tourism remains one of the few generally bright lights in the state's overall economic picture.