

Missouri Travel Council Legislative Update

From: Dale Amick 4/8/10

Despite numerous attempts to explain that further cuts would hinder the Division of Tourism's ability to market the state, the Missouri Senate Appropriations Committee has decided to cut about 5.9 million dollars from the agency's proposed budget. That is on top of the one million dollars the House of Representatives cut from the governor's recommended Division budget of 20.4 million dollars. The Appropriation Committee's budget blueprint now goes to the full Senate for final consideration.

Not since 1998 has the General Assembly appropriated this little money for tourism. At that time, the state's cooperative marketing program was funded at a level of \$1.6 million.

Once the Senate approves its budget version, a joint House -Senate conference committee will meet to iron out differences between the two chambers. And with many differences, this joint conference committee on the budget may be the most contentious in years.

The Senate Appropriations Committee felt compelled to cut 500 million dollars from the budget version approved by the House. Senate Appropriations Chairman Rob Mayer said that amount was needed to be cut to balance the new state budget as required by the Missouri Constitution.

State revenue continues to decline with incoming money 13 per cent below last year's level.

Arguing against further tourism budget cuts on the Appropriations Committee were Sens. Frank Barnitz and Tim Green.