

MISSOURI TRAVEL COUNCIL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

From: Dale Amick 3/25/10

The Missouri House of Representatives has passed a 19.4 million dollar budget for the Division of Tourism.

The House defeated numerous amendments to either eliminate or reduce the Division budget, while cutting over 200 million dollars from the budget blueprint approved by its Budget Committee earlier this month.

The House-approved budget is some 350 million dollars less than the budget blueprint recommended by Gov. Jay Nixon in January. That budget now goes to the Senate Appropriations Committee for its review. The legislature must write a new state budget by May 7.

During debate on the budget, Rep. Andrew Koenig of St. Louis County offered an amendment to completely eliminate the Division of Tourism. The amendment was defeated 136-15.

Speaking for Tourism and against that amendment on the House floor were Reps. Charlie Schlottach, Gina Walsh, Tom Loehner , among others.

Earlier this month, Koenig had supported an amendment by Rep. Doug Funderburk in the House Appropriations Committee for Economic Development to cut the Division budget by five million dollars. Again, Rep. Charlie Schlottach led the effort at that time to defeat that amendment and support tourism.

On the House floor Tuesday, four other amendments were offered to cut the Division budget by one million dollars or less. All were defeated.

Once again, thanks should go to Rep. Charlie Schlottach for holding the Division budget at 19.4 million dollars, while many other state programs were cut by much larger amounts.

The governor had recommended 20.4 million dollars for the Division budget in January. Since that time, revenue coming into the state treasury has dropped off significantly due to the current recession.