

The **Association** report

from the **Capitol**

January 14, 2016

The 2016 Legislative Session cranked up last week in Jefferson City; And while ethics reform got most of the headlines, MoDOT funding got its share of attention too. Several bills have been introduced which call for modest fuel tax increases.

On Wednesday (Jan 13) the Senate Transportation Committee held a hearing on SB623. It proposes to raise the gas tax by one and one-half cents a gallon plus increasing diesel by three and a half cents. Sen. Doug Libla of Poplar Bluff is sponsor of SB623. Sen. Libla also chairs that committee.

State employee pay and benefits have been mentioned, especially in discussions regarding matters that have been neglected too long and are especially deserving of attention. Increased pay is the focus of attention when it comes to state workers but more specifically, there have been recommendations to modify retirement systems with the intention of making it easier to attract and retain new employees.

In the weeks before the session began, I paid a visit to Dan Haug, the governor's budget director, urging him to include funding for a state match to the deferred compensation plan in the governor's recommendations for the FY17 Budget.

Deferred comp is a top priority for our Association, as it has been for a number of years. We promoted the statutory increase for the state match from \$25 to \$75 that passed in 1998 as HB229. In 2008 we led the effort to get the state match raised. from \$25 to \$35 a month (which was done through the appropriations process.) It was just three years later that the governor eliminated the state match because of an economic downturn.

I'll have reports on these and other issues as the legislature moves toward its mid-May conclusion.

**From Harry Hill, Lobbyist
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