

The **Association** report

from the **Capitol**

TEAM End-of-Session Report

May 21, 2013

The state legislative session which ended at 6 p.m. Friday (5-17) will likely be remembered as much for what didn't happen as what was accomplished.

The Association's top priority, a restart of the state's contribution to the deferred compensation plan, is not in the final draft of Fiscal Year 2014 budget. Early discussions with the chairman of the Appropriations Committee for General Administration were a cause for optimism. However lingering doubts regarding available revenue were enough to stall progress on the deferred comp issue. An improving economy should help legislators move toward re-establishing this employee benefit which was so popular among state workers.

Increased funding for MoDOT also failed to cross the finish line. SJR16, which would put a 1-percent general sales tax for transportation to a public vote, died after senate debate on Friday.

A modest state worker pay raise is included in the budget. It amounts to \$500 a year for each employee beginning with the first pay period in January 2014. The governor has not yet signed the appropriations bills which include the pay raise.

A bill that would have removed three state holidays, HB129, died in the house. Sponsored by Rep. Chuck Gatschenberger of St. Charles, it also proposed making the day after Thanksgiving a permanent holiday as well as offering an early retirement incentive based on years of service.

An Independence senator, Paul LeVota, sponsored SB312 which would have prohibited retired state employees from collecting state retirement benefits while working for a Missouri city or county. This bill died in a senate committee.

A bill which did pass this session, SB29, could be of concern to the Association. If signed by the governor, it would require many public employee organizations to have annual written authorization from each member before dues could be automatically deducted from their pay. While the bill is directed at labor unions, there is uncertainty if it includes our Association as well as some others because we are not specifically exempted in the bill.

A house version of the bill, HB64, includes a provision we requested which reads “this section shall not apply to voluntary member-owned trade associations wholly operating in the state of Missouri.” It is believed this would exempt us from the bill. However it was not included in the senate bill that passed despite an oral commitment we believed we had.

The governor has through July 14 to sign or veto bills.

**From Harry Hill, Lobbyist
Transportation Employees' Association of Missouri**