

The **Association** report

from the **Capitol**

February 15, 2007

The Senate Pensions and Veterans' Affairs Committee moved swiftly last week by hearing and voting "do pass-consent" our "prior service purchase" bill, SB127. The committee action, which took place on Wednesday (Feb. 7) is somewhat unusual in that committees traditionally will hold a hearing on a bill one week and take a vote on that bill no earlier than the following week. (SB127 also passed the Senate Rules Committee on Feb. 14.)

Also on Feb. 7, MoDOT Director, Pete Rahn, gave his annual "State of Transportation Address" to the General Assembly. He emphasized improvements in safety on the highways and specifically noted that median guard cables have been completed on I-70 across Missouri. Director Rahn said that the guard cables have proven to be 95 percent effective in stopping the deadly crossover crashes.

"The fact is that the most effective 'guard cable' is the one you strap across your body when you enter your vehicle," the director added making a plea for the legislature to pass tougher seat belt requirements. On Tuesday (Feb. 13th) the House heard and voted "do pass" the "primary" seat belt law. The Association was represented at that hearing and went on record in support for the proposal.

Some members of the general assembly have distinct opinions on the importance of an annual "State of Transportation Address." The chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee, Sen. Bill Stouffer, has filed legislation to repeal the requirement for the annual speech. Sen. Stouffer said he thinks it not necessary to raise the transportation address to the level of those given annually by the governor and chief justice of the supreme court.

Taking an opposite view on the annual state of transportation speech is Rep. Neal St. Onge, the Chairman of the House Transportation Committee. He points to the annual speech as an example of improved communications between the legislature and MoDOT leading to recent success the department has enjoyed.

**From Harry Hill, Lobbyist
Missouri Highway and Transportation Employees' Association**