

Week 2: January 19-23, 2009

In This Issue

- This Week At The Statehouse
- Budget, budget, budget
- House Energy Committee considers Renewable Portfolio Standard
- Bill proposes to suspend phase out of corporate franchise tax
- Commission established to streamline government
- How to retrieve unclaimed property
- Keep in Touch

This Week at the Statehouse

Martin Luther King Day made this a shorter than usual week. As committees began hearing testimony on various bills, it is very clear that the budget will be the focus of the legislative session, and deciding where to make cuts will be the most heated source of debate. We're still working through possible solutions, and I will have more to report in coming weeks.

I hope you will stop by to visit me if you are ever in Topeka. My new office is # L80 Docking State Office Building. About 90 Representatives office in Docking and several House committees are now located there as well, directly west of the State Capitol. The Statehouse is a bit of a maze as a result of construction, so if you do intend to visit for an event please be sure to call so I can help you find your way.

Budget, budget, budget

The discussion this week centered on the state budget, although there was no major movement. Both the House and Senate have been working on their respective appropriations bills all week, both trending toward "across the board" cuts.

The Governor's proposed budget, which was introduced last week, could not account for new, lower, revenue estimates, which proved to be much grimmer than the November estimate that must be followed in producing the Governor's budget. Senate proposals are aiming for \$100 million more in cuts than were included in the Governor's budget, for a total of \$300 million. As your legislator, I pledge to fight for the investments that matter most to you and your family. This debate will continue next week.

House Energy Committee considers Renewable Portfolio Standard

The House Energy and Utilities Committee began discussions on the implementation of a Renewable Portfolio Standard this week under House Bill 2013.

A Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) is a regulatory policy that requires utility companies to increase production of renewable energy sources (such as wind or solar), thereby decreasing use of nonrenewable energy sources (such as gas, oil, and coal) to generate electricity. House Bill 2013 calls for public utility companies to generate at least 10% of their nameplate capacity

from renewable resources. Westar Energy, a large supplier of electricity in Kansas, has agreed to pursue this standard.

Wind is lower in cost than any other source of power and our state is ranked 3rd in the nation for wind energy potential. To date 28 states have enacted a mandatory RPS. In terms of economic development, a mandatory RPS is the cornerstone of strong renewable energy policy because it indicates that our state is able to facilitate the market. By providing this regulatory certainty, we send a message to wind turbine manufacturers and developers that Kansas is open for business. In the long run, this offers the potential for thousands of new, green jobs across the state.

Bill proposes to suspend phase out of corporate franchise tax

This week the House Committee on Taxation heard testimony regarding House Bill 2028, which proposes to suspend the phase out of the corporate franchise tax. The tax is levied on the net worth of corporations and limited liability partnerships.

Legislation passed in 2007 provided for the phase out of the tax, which was scheduled to be repealed in its entirety by 2011. In this difficult budget year the Governor proposed that the Legislature suspend the phase out until our economic condition improves. Suspension of the tax will add \$14 million back into State General Fund. This is one of many difficult recommendations the Governor was forced to make to help fill the tremendous budget gap we face this year.

Commission established to streamline government

In an effort to identify new ways to save taxpayer dollars, Governor Kathleen Sebelius on Thursday announced that she has signed Executive Order 09-01, forming the Facilities Closure and Realignment Commission.

The commission will consider the savings, impact to communities and feasibility of closing or realignment of state facilities, and make recommendations to the governor and the legislature on or before December 1, 2009.

Facilities to be considered include, but are not limited to: the Kansas School for the Deaf; the Kansas School for the Blind; the Beloit Juvenile Correctional Facility; the State Developmental Disability Hospitals; and the Rainbow Mental Health Facility.

Executive Order 09-01 is available at:

<http://www.governor.ks.gov/executive/Ordres/default.htm>

Unclaimed Property

Each year thousands of people lose track of their bank accounts, cash, stocks, bonds, refunds, royalties, safe deposit boxes and other property. People move and forget to furnish their bank, broker, employer or insurance company with a forwarding address. The office of State

Treasurer Dennis McKinney works to locate the rightful owners and heirs to the over \$187 million in unclaimed assets currently being held by the State of Kansas.

If you think you may have unclaimed property you can check for your name through one of the following:

- You can look up your name on the State Treasurer's website at <http://www.kansascash.com/>.
- Call the Kansas Cash Connection at 1-800-432-0386 or (785) 296-4165 and ask to check your name; or
- Lists of owners are located in most county courthouses in the State of Kansas.

There are no fees or charges assessed by the Kansas State Treasurer's Office to file a claim. All services performed are done so absolutely FREE.

Keep in Touch

It is a special honor to serve as your state representative. I value and need your input on the various issues facing state government. Please feel free to contact me with your comments and questions. My office address is Room L80, Docking State Office Building, Topeka, KS 66612. You can reach me at (785) 296-7651 or call the legislative hotline at 1-800-432-3924 to leave a message for me. Additionally, you can e-mail me at Sydney.Carlin@house.ks.gov. You can also follow the legislative session online at www.kslegislature.org.