



Federal Priorities in Missouri's Meramec Region

2009 Congressional Issues in the Meramec Region

The board of the Meramec Regional Planning Commission wishes to share priorities with you, our Congressional leaders, that are of interest to our organization as a whole and to our individual cities and counties. They include:

TRANSPORTATION:

- Support federal legislation to provide sustainable funding for the nation's highway, aviation and transit needs and find a means to fund the Federal Highway Trust Fund. Access to quality roads for the movement of goods across this nation is vital to the prosperity of our cities, counties and states.
- Improve Highway 50 and Highway 63 to four-lane highways to stimulate growth, and industry and promote safety.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

- Provide more federal assistance for public infrastructure: highways, bridges, locks, dams, sewer/water systems, WPA-type projects, etc. Many Missouri cities need to upgrade their infrastructure to meet ever changing requirements for their constituents and local businesses, but do not have the needed tax dollars. We need more grant funding and federal and state support in this area. The increased economic development resulting from new infrastructure would provide additional money to improve other infrastructure.
- Fully fund the existing portfolio of federal community and economic development programs, most notably the Economic Development Administration's (EDA's) infrastructure, economic adjustment assistance and district planning grant programs and HUD's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and Small Business Administration (SBA) business lending programs. Maintain the mission and integrity of EDA and U.S. De-

Members of the Meramec Region's Congressional Delegation:

The Honorable Sens. Kit Bond and Claire McCaskill and Reps. Jo Ann Emerson, Ike Skelton & Blaine Luetkemeyer

Meramec Regional Planning Commission, representing eight counties and their respective cities, is pleased to present its 2009 Federal Priorities agenda to you. We want to express our appreciation to each of you for your past efforts on our behalf. We thank you for your leadership and willingness to serve during this time of great economic challenge. Please know the regional planning commissions across Missouri stand ready to help deliver Stimulus dollars to those needing them the most. We thank you in advance for your consideration of our 2009 Federal Priorities.

Sincerely,

Laura Antolak
MRPC Chairman

partment of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development and increase funding for both.

- Need affordable high-speed internet access for our rural communities. We are being placed at a great disadvantage in this fast paced world. As we slip further out of sync, our people fall further down the economic ladder.

HEALTH CARE and SOCIAL SERVICES ISSUES:

- Create affordable health insurance for all.
- Introduce federal control of health plans and services to provide uniform and affordable health benefits for all.
- Need higher Medicare reimbursement rates for rural hospitals.

ENERGY

- Reduce regulations to allow and encourage construction and use of nuclear power.
- Continue to work toward energy independence, however ethanol is not the answer. Encourage new sources of energy other than using food products like corn and soybeans. Promote more offshore drilling. Explore environmentally friendly ways of drilling for oil and use them. Open ANWR and go after oil shale while pursuing solar, wind and biomass conversion energy and expand nuclear energy production.

ENVIRONMENT and EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- Support enhanced federal guidelines, resources and incentives that build upon the experience, capacity and skills of regional planning commissions to coordinate, plan and implement homeland security and emergency preparedness activities on a regional basis.

EDUCATION:

- Support technical training for our labor force. This could be in the form of more incentives for schools to offer more intensive technical classes or assistance for our people to attend a two-year program close by. Rural students can attend Rolla Technical Institute but their numbers are limited to how many a school bus will hold. We need a more local solution.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

- Eliminate unfunded federal mandates to states or fully fund them. Many times these mandates trickle down to small local governments. We see this in many areas, including federal elections and wastewater/storm water regulations.

For more information, contact:

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The Meramec Regional Planning Commission. . .

is a voluntary council of local governments serving the Meramec area of Missouri. The MRPC area includes the eight counties of Crawford, Dent, Gasconade, Maries, Osage, Phelps, Pulaski and Washington and their respective cities. The mission of MRPC is to enhance the quality of life for residents of the Meramec Region. In pursuit of this mission, MRPC will bring about results in these areas:

- *Cleaner, healthier and safer communities,*
- *Greater socioeconomic and cultural wealth through community and economic development, and*
- *A stronger, unified voice in the legislative process.*

MRPC



This report was hand-delivered by Board Chairman Laura Antolak, Board Member Marcus Maggard and Executive Director Richard Cavender