



Federal Priorities in Missouri's Meramec Region

2010 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 are:

TRANSPORTATION:

- Provide enhanced and sustainable funding for the nation's highway, aviation and transit needs and find a means to fund the Federal Highway Trust Fund, as a part of the reauthorization bills for SAFETEA-LU and AIR-21. Specifically, the SAFETEA-LU bill should (1) Elevate the status of rural local officials from "consultation" to "cooperation" in statewide planning processes, (2) Establish a federal definition of Rural Planning Organizations, and (3) Require state DOTs to designate and fund RPO to help address transportation needs in non-metro areas

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. Reauthorize and fully fund EDA, and include (1) A provision that planning grants will be increased if appropriations are increased, (2) A provision that would lower the local government cost share on grants, and (3) A provision that would allow local control and ownership of RLFs, once fully

*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**

The Meramec Regional Planning Commission, representing eight counties and their respective cities, is pleased to present its 2010 Federal Priorities agenda to you. We want to express our appreciation to each of you for your past efforts on our behalf. You have assisted our region, as individual governments and as a group, in many significant ways. Most importantly, you and your staffs have always taken the time to discuss legislation, grants and issues of local concern. We thank you in advance for your consideration of our 2010 Federal Priorities.

Sincerely,

Laura Antolak
MRPC Chair

revolved. Fully fund USDA rural development grant programs for infrastructure improvements, businesses development, community facilities, housing and broadband services.

- Need affordable high-speed internet access for our rural communities. Rural areas without high-speed internet are placed at considerable economic disadvantage in this fast paced world.

HEALTH CARE and PUBLIC TRANSIT ISSUES:

- Equalize Medicare reimbursement rates for rural and urban hospitals.

ENERGY

- Aggressively encourage construction and use of nuclear power and work toward energy independence. Encourage use of natural gas, at least as an interim fuel, while encouraging new sources of energy other than ethanol using food products. Consideration should be given to environmentally friendly ways of oil drilling and the exploration of oil shale, solar, wind and biomass conversion.
- Oppose Cap and Trade legislation because of the burden of increased energy costs it would place on local governments and Missouri businesses.

HOMELAND SECURITY and EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- Ensure rural regions receive adequate resources and equitable access to the broad portfolio of homeland security and emergency preparedness programs, including first responder, pre-disaster mitigation and all hazards mitigation resources. Fully fund FEMA's flood map modernization and pre-disaster programs. 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 provide access to more intensive technical classes or assistance for our people to attend a two-year program, including satellite classes. 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 ISSUES:

- Eliminate unfunded federal mandates to states or fully fund them. Many times these mandates trickle down to small local governments. Prime examples include federal election costs and wastewater/storm water regulations.
- Develop and implement a plan to collect sales tax on Internet sales and redistribute to state and local governments.



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.*

For more information, contact:

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This report was hand-delivered by Board Chairman Laura Antolak, Vice Chairman Russell Scheulen and Executive Director Richard Cavender