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MISSOURIAN

Chamber of Commerce urges legislators to stabilize UM System funding in 2018

BY BRENDAN CROWLEY

Missouri could be facing more budget cuts this year, but legislators from Columbia and Boone County in the Missouri General Assembly will try to minimize the impact to the UM System.

Speaking to the Columbia Chamber of Commerce at an event on Thursday to discuss its legislative agenda, Rep. Kip Kendrick, D-Columbia, said he expects slow revenue growth this year will lead to budget cuts, but not as much as last year.

The chamber looked back at its lobbying efforts in 2017 and outlined its major legislative priorities for 2018 at the event, which took place at the Food Bank for Central and Northeast Missouri. The chamber wants to stabilize funding for the UM System and Missouri's transportation system.

Missouri cut the core funding of the UM System by 9 percent in 2017, after Gov. Eric Greitens tacked on an additional \$11 million in cuts to the 6.5 percent cut the General Assembly agreed to.

Rep. Cheri Toalson Reisch, R-Hallsville, said her family helped found MU in 1839 and called it the engine that drives Columbia and Boone County. She said funding for the MU Research Reactor Center should be a priority.

The chamber gave itself a score of six out of nine for the success of its 2017 legislative agenda. It issued a scorecard listing bills that fit its agenda and how each representative from Columbia and Boone County voted on them.

One bill the chamber supported [changed workers' compensation rules](#) to make it harder for an employee to sue an employer if fired for filing a compensation claim. The chamber's scorecard said the changes will

“help safeguard the employer-funded workers’ compensation system from frivolous benefits claims and excessive litigation.”

Reps. Kendrick and Martha Stevens, both Democrats from Columbia, voted against the bill.

Another bill the chamber backed gave judges in Missouri the power to decide if expert witnesses are giving relevant, fact-based testimony, bringing the state in line with federal courts and 39 other states. Supporters said the bill would protect businesses from frivolous lawsuits by raising the standard for evidence brought to trial.

Stevens also opposed that bill.

The chamber also lists appropriations bills for [education](#) and [transportation](#) among its 2017 legislative achievements. [Columbia Public Schools brought in about \\$400,000 in additional funding](#) when the [General Assembly agreed to fully fund the formula that allocates money to schools](#). The transportation appropriation set aside [\\$2.5 million for a new terminal at Columbia Regional Airport](#), a quarter of the \$10 million goal the chamber set.

Stevens voted against both bills.

Several of the chamber’s 2017 priorities will carry over into the new year, including the rest of the funding for the airport terminal.

State Sen. Caleb Rowden, R-Columbia, announced that he had been named to the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee earlier on Thursday. He said he appreciated the engagement of the chamber with the General Assembly. It was a major factor in getting the airport funds last year, he said.

“That was a team effort,” Rowden said. “There have been a number of team efforts that have been wins.”

Also high on the list for 2018 is a sustainable plan to fund the state’s transportation system. In 2017, area legislators supported the creation of the [21st Century Missouri Transportation System Task Force](#), which [recommended putting a gas tax hike on the ballot](#), an idea that has consistently failed to gain traction in the General Assembly.

Rep. Chuck Basye, R-Rocheport, said transportation funding should be a focus. He said he's not in favor of tax increases in general, but he would vote to put the gas tax hike on the ballot.

"Things have changed since the last time we raised the fuel tax," Basye said. "I'm not saying that's going to happen, but I'm pretty confident something will happen this session."

Basye said he filed a [bill that would address school transportation costs](#), and it will get a hearing before the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee next week. The bill would allow any school district to contract with any municipality for school transportation.

"I think we'll get some better support behind that, and hopefully get it through," Basye said.

The chamber also wants to see Missouri join the [Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement](#), which requires member states to change their sales tax rules to try to simplify the collection of sales taxes over state lines. [A bill that would have put Missouri in line with the agreement's 24 member states](#) was not considered by the General Assembly in 2017. Advocates say it would [even the playing field](#) between brick-and-mortar stores and online stores that pay no sales tax.

Columbia voters [rejected a local use tax for the third time](#) in 2017, and Boone County voters also rejected a [local use tax](#).



Columbia Chamber of Commerce announces 2018 legislative priorities

By TAYLOR PETRAS

Watch video at: <http://www.abc17news.com/news/columbia-chamber-of-commerce-announces-2018-legislative-priorities/681439961>

COLUMBIA, Mo. - With the 2018 legislative session officially underway in Jefferson City, the Columbia Chamber of Commerce is unveiling the top priorities on its legislative agenda.

Chamber officials announced the business organization's priorities Thursday at an event alongside Columbia and Boone County lawmakers.

"It's just a great agenda that I think the whole community can get behind and definitely the Boone County delegation can," said Rep. Kip Kendrick, (D) Columbia.

The Columbia Chamber of Commerce has identified the following as its legislative priorities for 2018:

1. Support stabilizing the funding for University of Missouri to help ensure the university can carry out its mission.

2. Support a sustainable funding plan for a comprehensive transportation system to better support Missouri's economic growth, with a focus of advocating on rebuilding Interstate 70.

3. Support the efforts in FY19 to expand education and training for the University of Missouri Research Reactor (MURR).

4. Continue to advance efforts to complete the Columbia Regional Airport terminal project.

5. Support legislation that implements the streamlined sales and use tax agreement. This legislation would help level the playing field between local retailers and their out-of-state competitors when it comes to use or sales taxes on internet and catalogue purchases made by consumers.

6. Enact a statewide prescription drug monitoring program that lowers workforce drug abuse and insurance costs for employers.

Chamber president Matt McCormick said transportation funding continues to be a top priority for the business organization each year.

"Funding for transportation so that we can fix I-70 and other roadways that we need," he said. "You've got to have a good transportation system to move commerce."

Columbia and Boone County lawmakers said they supported the Chamber's priorities.

"We need to support the University of Missouri, we need to get the research reactor help, we need to get the airport new terminal going and so they mirror a lot of my own priorities," said Rep. Cheri Toalson Reisch, (R) Columbia.

McCormick said the prescription drug monitoring program is new on the chamber's list this year. A statewide PDMP has failed to pass in the Missouri legislature leaving it the only state in the country without a prescription drug tracking program.

Columbia and Boone County joined the St. Louis County PDMP in 2017.



[How to bring more money to Columbia: local lawmakers weigh-in](#)

By **KEVIN KO**

COLUMBIA - Local legislators spent the second day of the 2018 Missouri Legislative Session in Columbia to discuss ways of bringing more economic success to the city.

The Columbia Chamber of Commerce hosted the legislative reception at the Food Bank for Central and Northeast Missouri on Thursday. The chamber said the session has become somewhat of a tradition.

"The chamber's priorities are always good priorities. They're common sense, they're not really partisan in nature, and they're things that really impact this community," Sen. Caleb Rowden, R-Columbia, said. "Things that have been ongoing issues in the community: transportation and infrastructure, job creation, the opioid epidemic are all things that reach across party lines."

Several lawmakers spoke about their plans for the new legislative session:

- Senator Caleb Rowden (R - District 19)
- Representative Kip Kendrick (D - 45th District)
- Representative Martha Stevens (D - 46th District)
- Representative Chuck Basye (R - 47th District)
- Representative Cheri Toalson Reisch (R - 44th District)
- Representative Sara Walsh (R - 50th District)

"I get complaints about bridges a lot. A good example is the overpass on Rocheport on I-70," Rep. Chuck Basye, R-Rocheport, said. "When I first got on the legislature, a MoDOT [Missouri Department of Transportation] engineer took me on a ride and you can see rebar and stuff hanging out."

"It changed my opinion - I've always been an advocate for no more taxes and all that, but I've got to say that I've changed my opinion on that. We should send a good proposal for the people to decide and let Missourians vote on that," he said.

Legislators also listened as representatives from the city's chamber of commerce said there are six priorities heading into the new legislative session:

1. **More funding for the University of Missouri**
2. Improve the city's transportation system, like rebuilding roads
3. Expand training for the MU Research Reactor (MURR)
4. Continue building and completing the Columbia Regional Airport Terminal Project
5. Support legislation in favor of the Streamlined Sales Tax Project (SSTP)
6. Start an official, statewide prescription drug monitoring program

"There's no better way to understand the needs of the community, the passions of the community than to be out talking to those folks. We get a lot of emails and things that say, 'Hey, we're in favor of this or this.' But I think talking to them, looking at them eye-to-eye, face-to-face and seeing why is really important," Rowden said.

Columbia Chamber of Commerce President Matt McCormick said this was the first time the session was held at the Food Bank for Central and Northeast Missouri.



Who Is Studying Online (and Where)

New federal data show continued growth in online course taking in 2016, even as overall college enrollments were flat or falling. Big gainers: Western Governors and Arizona State. Big losers: the big for-profits.

BY DOUG LEDERMAN

The number of college students enrolled in at least one online course -- and the proportion of all enrolled students who are studying online -- continued to rise at U.S. institutions in the 2016 academic year, newly released federal data show.

The statistics, part of [a major release of provisional data](#) on enrollments, employment and other topics from the Education Department's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, provide the most up-to-date information on enrollments in online and distance education.

The overarching story is a familiar one: even as overall enrollment in postsecondary institutions stays flat (unlike [recent numbers](#) from the National Student Clearinghouse, the federal data show enrollments staying roughly constant, not declining), online enrollments climb.

As a result, so, too, does the proportion of all students at institutions eligible to award federal financial aid who are taking at least one course at a distance, as seen in the table below.

The increased likelihood of being enrolled online is occurring at most levels and types of institutions in higher education.

Since 2014, the proportion of undergraduate students at Title IV-eligible institutions who are enrolled in at least one distance education course has risen from 27.1 percent to 30 percent in 2016, and the proportion of graduate students enrolled at least partially online has grown from 32.5 percent to 36.6 percent in 2016. Community college students (30.9 percent) were more likely than undergraduates at four-year public institutions (29 percent) and four-year private colleges (25.6 percent) to be enrolled in at least one online course.

	2014	2015	2016
All Students	20,637,987	20,536,231	20,464,608

Students Not Enrolled in Any Distance Courses	14,885,489	14,547,400	14,124,317
Students Enrolled in at Least One Distance Course	5,752,498	5,988,831	6,340,291
Proportion of All Students Who Are Enrolled in at Least One Distance Course	27.9%	29.2%	31%
Students Enrolled Exclusively in Distance Courses	2,804,867	2,873,144	2,983,075
Students Enrolled in Some (but Not All) Distance Courses	2,947,631	3,115,687	3,357,216

Students at for-profit colleges were by far likeliest to be enrolled at a distance -- a full 57.5 percent studied at least partially online in 2016. But for-profit institutions as a sector continued to see a large overall drop in the number of students they enrolled (from about 1.54 million in 2015 to about 1.46 million in fall 2016), so the number of students enrolled online dropped, too.

Where Are They Enrolling?

Not surprisingly given that fact, for-profit institutions dominate the list of individual institutions that experienced meaningful drops in online enrollment from 2015 to 2016, led by the University of Phoenix, American Public University System and Kaplan University. Phoenix's drop was particularly stark -- more than 30,000 students.

But not all for-profit institutions had similar fates: Grand Canyon University grew by nearly 25 percent, and institutions such as Walden, Capella and Ashford Universities held steady or grew modestly.

The biggest gainers among nonprofit institutions were behemoths like Western Governors University and Arizona State University. A few, including Liberty University and Baker College, lost significant enrollments.

Editor's note:

The University of Missouri is included in a listing online enrollment. It states that MU's fall 2015 online enrollment was 10,106, and fall 2016 enrollment was 8,576. The full report can be seen [here](#).

Missouri Expands Performance Funding for Public Colleges

NO MU MENTION

By PAUL FAIN

Missouri's Coordinating Board for Higher Education this week voted to expand a performance-funding formula for public institutions, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported.

The state had performance funding in place during previous budget cycles, but the formula only applied to new money. The just-approved version would tie 10 percent of state funding to performance measures such as degree completion, job-placement rates and how colleges spend money, according to the newspaper.

Roughly 35 states have tried a version of performance funding, with a wide range of approaches and amounts of money involved. Missouri's new version follows a 9 percent budget cut (\$88 million) last year to its public institutions, which resulted in hundreds of layoffs.

T COLUMBIA DAILY
TRIBUNE

MU Extension council to hold election

The Boone County University of Missouri Extension Council will soon hold its annual election to elect members who will provide direction to the University of Missouri Extension's education programs in Boone County.

Boone County residents 18 and older can vote in the election. Online voting begins Monday and concludes Jan. 23. Paper ballots can be requested by mail by calling 573-445-9792 or by

emailing booneco@missouri.edu. Ballots also can be picked up and dropped off at the Boone County University of Missouri Extension office at 1012 N. Route UU in Columbia.