

# IN THE NEWS THIS WEEK

NEWS BRIEFS FROM AROUND THE CAPITOL JULY 21 - JULY 27, 2009

**NOTE:** Information copied directly from media source

July 21, 2009

## **Webber lauds Nixon's Iraq visit**

*Columbia Business Times*, Jason Rosenbaum

Nixon told reporters that Missouri troops were in good spirits and not complaining about equipment issues. According to the Springfield News-Leader, soldiers were grateful that Nixon took time to visit them. One local lawmaker – Rep. Stephen Webber, D-Columbia – also expressed positive vibes about Nixon's visit to the Middle East. Before becoming a lawmaker, Webber served tours of duty in Iraq as a U.S. Marine.

"As a Veteran, I am grateful that Governor Nixon is demonstrating to our brave troops that Missourians will not forget their sacrifice," Webber said in a statement. "When I was a 20 year old Marine in Iraq I would have been thrilled by a visit from Missouri's Governor. I know the support that Governor Nixon has shown during this trip will mean a lot to our troops and their families."

July 24, 2009

## **Southwest Missouri lawmakers join in health care debate**

*KY3*, Marie Saavedra

President Obama continues his push for revamping health care. "The time is now; we must take action; we cannot afford the status quo," said state Rep. Sara Lampe, D-Springfield. Lampe and state Rep. Charlie Noor, D-Springfield, are echoing Obama's calls for lower costs, more choice and access for everyone. Back on Capitol Hill, Republicans agree change is needed but how it's done and how fast is a concern.

July 25, 2009

## **AmerenUE calls for third price hike**

*Springfield News-Leader*, Jim Salter, AP

Utility customers in parts of Missouri could be in for another rate increase as early as next year after AmerenUE officials on Friday announced a request for an 18 percent hike. Warner Baxter, president and chief executive officer of the St. Louis-based utility, said the \$402 million request to the Missouri Public Service Commission would amount to less than 50 cents per day for the average household. But it would be AmerenUE's third rate increase since 2007, and Baxter acknowledged that in a lagging economy, it could be hard on some customers.

## **Long sought bills make it into law for Bringer**

*Hannibal Courier-Post*, Danny Henley

During her seven years as a member of the Missouri House, State Rep. Rachel Bringer, D-Palmyra, has learned many lessons about how the legislative process works in Jefferson City. Her persistence was rewarded this year when two pieces of legislation she has been trying to get passed for years finally made it to the governor's desk, where they were signed.

July 27, 2009

## **Businesses face legislative attack**

*The Lebanon Daily Record*, Ken York

Three pieces of pending legislation could spell doom for some Missouri businesses that are already hanging on by their fingernails in the tough economy, according to the president of the state Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In a short, fiery oratory before local civic and business leaders, Daniel P. Mehan Thursday blasted a proposed law that would make it easier for workers to form unions. That, the health-care reform package and the "cap and trade" climate change bill are all proposals he would like to see killed before they have a chance to "murder businesses," he said.

## **Nixon impressed by Missouri troops in Iraq, Afghanistan**

*MissouriNet*, Brent Martin

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Nixon joined a Department of Defense sponsored tour with four other governors, touring Iraq, Afghanistan as well as a military hospital in Germany. In the outer reaches of Afghanistan, Nixon met with the Missouri National Guard's Agri-Business Development Team, about 60 Missourians teaching Afghan farmers better methods of agriculture. Nixon says he wanted to see how the military has integrated National Guard units, the Reserves and the regular Army. He says it seems to be working well. Nixon also, along with the other governors, has requested that once the equipment being used by the American military in Iraq is no longer needed, that some of it can be sent back to Missouri to use in the National Guard's responsibilities here.

## **NIXON'S WEEK 28 GRADE: C**

KY3, David Catanese

With Gov. Nixon out of the country in the Middle East for the first half of the week, much of the buzz surrounded the way he went about it -- in not notifying Lt. Gov. Peter Kinder before he left. When Nixon returned from pumping up soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq on Wednesday, he was greeted with the news that a Senate committee would probe why his Department of Natural Resources withheld a report on high levels of E.coli in Lake of the Ozarks. Nixon has said the report should have been released when requested -- but what's unclear is if he thinks anyone should lose their job over the decision. A date for the hearings have not yet been set, and some have blamed the incident on DNR holdovers from the Blunt administration. How Nixon handles the investigation will give voters a window into his commitment to "transparency and accountability." To wind up the week, Nixon played hoops in the Show-Me State Games, where the Columbia Missourian notes he went 15 of 25 from the free-throw line. So he's no Steve Nash. But any pol willing to publicly burn a little sweat while sporting a bright yellow T with red Nikes, at least deserves a hat tip.

## **Dixon: E.Coli Report Investigation Could Lead to Firings**

KY3, David Catanese

Springfield State Rep. Bob Dixon suggests that an investigation into why a report revealing high levels of E.coli was withheld from the public could lead to firings at the Department of Natural Resources. Earlier this week, a Senate committee said it would investigate why the Lake of the Ozarks E.coli report was held back. DNR initially said The Kansas City Star that the report was withheld because of tourism concerns. "A person who would do something like that in the private sector would lose their job, or if a business did it, what would happen? People would no longer patronize that business," Dixon told The Notebook. "I think we need, you got to have accountability."