



View from the Chair

Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission

Commission Will Conduct National Search for New Director

February 18, 2015



Dear «GreetingLine»

The Commission will conduct a national search for Dave Nichols' replacement as MoDOT director. Commissioners faced a similar decision when Pete Rahn vacated the director's chair in 2010. Three current commissioners were part of that national search and there was vigorous competition for the job. That process caused us to examine in a thoughtful way MoDOT's needs at that moment in history; it also gave us a chance to hear ideas and perspectives from some very talented candidates from across the country.

In the end, the Commission chose an internal candidate, Kevin Keith. The endorsement that came from such a national search empowered Kevin to undertake historic internal changes within MoDOT – the Bolder Five-Year Direction which downsized MoDOT by 20 percent and put \$600 million back on the roads through contractor awards.

MoDOT now faces a similar historic moment as it seeks to manage an underfunded system while working with the General Assembly and the Governor to find a funding solution. This decision does not reflect any lack of confidence in the current senior leadership at MoDOT. To the contrary, there are leaders within MoDOT who stack up against any in the country. We simply believe that the best way to find the right person for this time in Missouri's future is through another national search.

Some would question our ability to attract talent to lead a department of transportation that is underfunded and unable to support its highway system, much less the state's other transportation needs such as transit, ports, general-use airports, rail and bicycle-pedestrian facilities. Some

would say that now is not the time to come to Missouri. We see it differently. Despite the lack of funding MoDOT remains a high-functioning DOT that is well regarded as a national leader. True leaders relish a challenge – and right now Missouri is a challenge. There is no place to go but up.

The Commission expects the search will last into the fall and will name an interim director at its April meeting to assume responsibilities after May 1. Director Nichols will be sorely missed but the Commission expects a very smooth transition in leadership. In the meantime, Dave Nichols and the Commission will continue to urge our leaders to take the first step this legislative session to address the funding crisis.

In gratitude,

Stephen R. Miller
Chairman

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