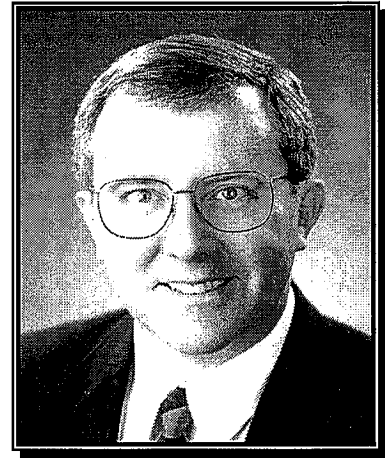


From The Desk Of...

Jay Scott Emler

Kansas Senate 35th District



~Week of February 13 - February 17, 2006~

- **Affordable Airfare Fund**

The Senate approved the creation of a State Affordable Airfare Fund by a vote of 35-2 on Thursday. The fund will be used to reduce fares, increase competition and encourage additional flight options in Kansas, mainly at Wichita's Mid-Continent Airport. The state will provide 75%, or \$5 million, of the \$6.67 million allocated to the fund, with the remainder of the money being provided by local sources.

- **Biofuels**

SB 388, the first biofuels bill to reach the Senate floor, was debated on Wednesday. The bill will create the Kansas qualified biodiesel fuel producer incentive fund to encourage the production of biodiesel in Kansas. On Thursday the Senate approved the measure by a vote of 39-0. The Agriculture committee continued working its way through a number of biofuel-related proposals. SB 544 made its way out of the committee on Wednesday morning. It will set the tax rate on E-85 ethanol blended fuels at \$.17 per gallon until 2020 and \$.11 per gallon after 2020.

- **Consolidation**

A pair of consolidation-related bills were debated on the Senate floor this week. On Wednesday, the Senate passed SB 379 by a vote of 39-0. The bill will eliminate the requirements for state approval of any local government consolidation. If any elective office will be eliminated by the consolidation, the elimination must be approved by the voters on a separate ballot question. It was amended on the floor to require a 60% majority vote for any city-county consolidation.

The Senate debated SB 481 on Wednesday, and on Thursday passed the bill by a vote of 39-0. The bill will give consolidating school districts an opportunity to choose between receiving the same amount of state aid as the separate districts would have received during a transition period of up to three years, or receiving the state aid for the single district under the current formula immediately. If passed, this bill will ease the transition from two districts to one by allowing them to retain their state aid during the transition period.

- **Income Taxes**

The Senate approved a pair of new income tax checkoffs on Wednesday - one for military emergency relief and another for breast cancer research. SB 384 passed 39-0, and will allow taxpayers the option of contributing to either of the two funds when filing an income tax return.

- **TOLL FREE LEGISLATIVE HOTLINE**

The State Library will continue its practice of operating the toll free hotline for Kansans to call their legislators and leave brief messages. The hotline number is 1-800-432-3924. If you are receiving this newsletter and really would like to be taken off my list, just let me know. My legislative district includes: Barton, Dickinson, Ellsworth, Lincoln, Marion, McPherson and Rice counties. If you know of others that would like to receive this newsletter, have them contact me and I will add them to my list. I prefer to send by e-mail since the cost is essentially free, but I do have a limited legislative postage allowance, which is largely reserved for distributing this letter.

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