

Senator Jay Emler

Kansas Senate District 35



From the Desk of Jay Scott Emler

Week of January 14 - January 25, 2008

New Format for Newsletter

You may have noticed that this first newsletter of 2008 looks a bit different. Many individuals have indicated a preference to receive this newsletter by email. To make this process easier for all of us, I have added a mailing list system to my website, <http://www.jayemler.com/>. With this new system you will be able to update your information on our mailing list, or even remove your name from our list if you prefer. Please [contact us](#) if you experience any difficulties with this message, or with the system. Thank you for your patience.

Sales Tax Treatment of Hunting Fees

The Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation heard testimony from the Department of Revenue (DOR) on their recent self-audit of businesses involved in providing hunting services. The DOR has interpreted K.A.R. 92-19-22b(a)(1) to say they have the authority to collect sales tax on this service and sent out notices to all related businesses informing them of such. If the DOR pursues this policy, a bill may be introduced that would create a tax exemption for these businesses.

Good News from the Kansas Sentencing Commission

The Committee on Judiciary heard a report from the Kansas Sentencing Commission and their projections for prison bed space given the current figures and implications of legislation passed last year. According to their report, Kansas juvenile detention facilities will have nearly double the capacity needed over the next 10 years, and adult facilities will have enough room to accommodate their inmates until 2016. The committee also conducted a hearing on SB 409, which would eliminate probation as a sentencing option for people convicted of three or more felonies.

Status of Flood Repair Plans and Green Space Funding

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks testified to the Senate Ways and Means Committee regarding the status of flood repair projects. It is suggested that \$1.5 million from the Expanded Lottery Act Revenues Fund be provided to finance flood repairs at the state parks that occurred in 2007. The KDWP would allocate some of this funding to local communities to help with existing park repairs and

also to develop green space in flood zones created by FEMA home buyouts.

Wind Industry and Energy

The Senate Utilities Committee heard a report on Kansas' opportunities in wind energy. Kansas currently ranks in the top three in the nation for wind energy potential, and we have not taken full advantage of this. The development of wind energy could reduce energy costs and create jobs in rural areas of our state, including an estimated \$19 million paid to landowners whose property would be used for wind energy projects. The demand for resources and energy are expected to rise considerably over the next decade. It is suggested that Kansas act now if we hope to realize our potential in wind energy and ensure that our efforts help Kansans instead of neighboring states. Keeping rates affordable to our citizens is a priority in this debate.

Joint Caucus Hears from Kansas Health Policy Authority

The Senate held a joint caucus to hear KHPA's policy recommendations for this year. Among those recommendations, KHPA identified three priority areas that they will focus on:

- Promoting personal care
- Promoting preventative medicine and finding a medical home
- Making health insurance affordable for all Kansans.

KHPA also requested a raise in the tobacco tax by 50 cents per pack to help pay for a portion of their proposals and has recommended a statewide smoking ban in public places.

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.

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[Have a question? Contact me](#)

NOTE: I receive many emails and I need to make certain I am responding to my constituents and not to somebody in another part of the state. I want to be responsive to you, so please include your street address so that I know I am being responsive to my constituents. My legislative district includes: Barton, Dickinson, Ellsworth, Lincoln, Marion, McPherson and Rice counties. .