



From the Executive Director Larry L. "Butch" Brown

This year's Legislative Session has been a time of learning and a time of growth, but mostly I feel it has been a time of success.

As executive director for this large, complex agency, I have learned much in working within our state's legislative process that can help all of us achieve shared goals and objectives. Take for example the process of communicating accurate information in a timely manner to the legislative body. This seems on the surface to be a very simple and obvious part of any working relationship. In fact, I've learned it is not simple, but a time consuming and often delicate process—one that is worthy of investment and that pays large dividends if well done. Even then, sometimes the best laid plans go awry.

This newsletter was originally intended to be a twice-monthly update of legislative activity for MDOT employees. While good in theory, a twice monthly printing was not feasible. The reality is proposed legislation tends to move so quickly through various committees and processes that it becomes impossible to report every twist and turn it might take while making its way through the legislature.

Regardless, we have all learned and in learning, we have grown. But more than that, we have succeeded in meeting our primary objectives for the 2002 Legislative Session. From day one my objective concerning the Mississippi Legislature and MDOT has been to help "build a bridge" between the two so that

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MDOT's primary mission of building and maintaining our transportation system could be effectively achieved. I believe we – all of us – have done that.

The crowning piece of legislation passed into law this year is Senate Bill 2058. Known as Vision 21 - MDOT's *Proposed Highway Program for the 21st Century*, this needs-based, pay-as-you-go highway program will upgrade existing roadways or build new highways where they are needed most, *without burdening the public with new taxes*. This is achieved through the reauthorization of the existing revenue stream that is currently funding the 1987 Four-Lane Highway Program ('87 Program). By fiscal year 2006, MDOT will be able to dedicate \$200 million a year to constructing Vision 21.

Specifically, Vision 21 provides for the completion of phases I, II and III of the '87 Program, prioritization of Phase IV of the '87 Program and the Gaming Roads Program on a "needs" basis, special projects that are contingent upon federal or other funding sources—such as the proposed Interstate Highway 69 project—and others.

The legislation also allows MDOT the flexibility to maximize the use of federal funding by allowing the substitution of federal dollars for state dollars on gaming and maintenance projects.

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Beginning in 2005, SB 2058 requires MDOT to analyze the capacity of the existing highway system and report the results to the Legislature annually thereafter. The purpose is to keep the Legislature informed so that Vision 21 can remain flexible and will accommodate changes in traffic patterns such as those caused by unexpected economic development.

If you'd like a color-coded map of Mississippi's state maintained Highway System which identifies Vision 21 highway corridors based on their place for attention in the "needs based" program, go to the Vision 21 Map on MDOT's website which is located at www.goMDOT.com.



Governor Ronnie Musgrove (seated), Mississippi Transportation Commissioners Wayne Brown and Dick Hall, members of the Mississippi Legislature and other key transportation officials take time for a ceremonial signing of Senate Bill 2058 - Vision 21 - Monday, April 15, 2002, in the State Capitol Building in Jackson. Known as Mississippi's Needs Based Highway Program for the 21st Century, Vision 21 is being touted as the state's largest, most comprehensive civil works highway program to date.

Pictured from left to right are: Lawrence Warren, Warren Paving; Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) Executive Director Larry L. "Butch" Brown; Rep. Mike Eakes, Transportation Commissioner Wayne Brown; Rep. Donny Ryals; Lt. Gov. Amy Tuck; Sen. Lynn Posey; Gov. Musgrove; Transportation Commissioner Dick Hall; Sen. Bill Canon; Sen. Robert H. "Rob" Smith; Sen. Bob M. Dearing; Sen. Delma Furniss; Jeanie Smith, executive director, Mississippi Municipal League; Don Richardson, executive director, Mississippi Road Builders Association; Bob Montgomery, president, AHEAD; Tommy Wallace, Wallace Construction; Jim Kopf, MDOT chief engineer; Rep. Randy Pierce; Bo Bilbo, representing U.S. Senator Trent Lott; Andrew Hughes, Mississippi division administrator, Federal Highway Administration; and Chris Richardson, representing U.S. Senator Thad Cochran.

MDOT Legislation— The Final Status

During the 2002 Legislative Session, MDOT's Government Affairs team tracked all legislation that pertained to MDOT or that could possibly have a bearing on the agency, as well as legislation introduced by the department. Below is a sampling of bills that will impact MDOT or you as a state employee and that has been signed into law by the Governor.

House Bill Number & Subject:

251 Provides that state agencies shall prevent the inadvertent disclosure of an individual's social security number to the general public or others without a legitimate and lawful need.

1783 MDOT Appropriations Bill. The appropriation is \$957,880,223.

998 Establishes a paid educational leave program for the employees of MDOT to pursue undergraduate or graduate degrees in civil engineering in exchange for continued employment as professional engineers in the department.

Senate Bill Number & Subject:

2058 Vision 21- MDOT's Proposed Highway Program for the 21st Century.

2133 Provides that MDOT's annual equipment appropriation along with funds received from buy-backs, insurance settlements and equipment auctions be deposited in a revolving fund. This gives MDOT budgetary authority to purchase and replace equipment.

2403 Revises the size restrictions governing outdoor advertising signs.



Mississippi Transportation Commission

Zack Stewart, *Northern District*
Dick Hall, *Central District*
Wayne Brown, *Southern District*,
Commission Chairman
Linda Ferrell, *Secretary to the Commission*

Mississippi Department of Transportation

Larry L. "Butch" Brown, *Executive Director*
Jim Kopf, *Chief Engineer/Deputy Director*

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2410 Sets guidelines for farm equipment delivery and requires the equipment to be marked in a certain manner.

2848 Lowers the blood alcohol content level for defining legally drunk from .10 to .08 percent.

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Legislation for 2003

Although January seems a long way off, it isn't too early to begin thinking of those issues you'd like to see presented to the 2003 Mississippi Legislature. If there is an issue

within your area of expertise that you feel can be improved upon with the passage of new legislation, please be sure and contact either your supervisor or MDOT's Governmental Affairs Team.

MDOT's Mission

The Mississippi Department of Transportation is responsible for providing a safe intermodal transportation network that is planned, designed, constructed, and maintained in an effective, cost-efficient and environmentally sensitive manner.



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