**This Week in the Missouri Senate:
Digital Audio File Script on Session Preview**

This week in the Missouri Senate, we review two of the major issues that could be a part of the upcoming 2016 legislative session…

-Nat Snd-

*Senator Richard: “That’s the debate now, and we’ll just have to see. I mean, we talked about it last year.”*

*Senator Keaveny: “We can talk about toll roads. They came up, a little bit, last year.”*

Senate President Pro Tem Ron Richard of Joplin says transportation has gone unanswered in this state for several years…

-Richard 1-

*“I don’t know if there’s an appetite on either side of the building for a tax increase. Maybe there is. The speaker and I will be conferring on that shortly. In an election year, tax questions are pretty hard to cross the line.”*

Senate Minority Floor Leader Joseph Keaveny of St. Louis adds he believes better roads come down to more revenue…

-Keaveny 2-

*“I think we need to raise a tax. We need to raise revenue, be it a gas tax — which I would prefer — be it a sales tax, or just increase the income tax, take it out of general revenue. To address our state transportation needs, we need to increase revenue.”*

He also says nobody seems to be willing to do what’s needed for transportation…

-Keaveny 3-

*“I think this is an issue that’s going to take a crisis, and it’s going to be a major bridge closure, catastrophic flood that takes out a major arterial road or something that we’re going to have to address. I think that’s what’s going to move it off dead center. Bear in mind, in 2015, we had three or four senators filibuster a 2-cent gas tax. So, I’m not sure the environment has changed in the Senate about that.”*

Senator Richard says, going into the new year, he has had time to re-evaluate how the Missouri Senate works with the Missouri House of Representatives…

-Richard 4-

*“The biggest issue is there are a lot of people who like to pull the two parts of the building apart, particularly the hallways and the some of the lobbying and the bureaucrats. And when there’s chaos, you know, sometimes they win. And, I will say that the speaker and I have a really good relationship. I knew his father. Don’t believe the hallway chatter. We talk a lot and we’re going to be working together on a lot of projects. Hopefully, we’ll be a good team for the next three years.”*

Senate Keaveny says it’s time for ethics reform…

-Keaveny 5-

*“If we’re going to have ethics reform, I think it’s got to be comprehensive. I think we’ll talk about letting legislators resign and become lobbyists, I think we’ll talk about lobbyists’ gifts and, I think, we’ll talk about campaign finance limits. I think all three of those. If anything, I don’t think we’re going to pass a small bill. It’s going to have to be a comprehensive ethics bill that we pass.”*

And, Sen. Richard agrees…

-Richard 6-

*“These revolving door…. I mean, not being so the lobbying core needs to be resolved in a year or two. The reporting of meals and things needs to be open and transparent, not to go to committees. The trips and things…. Yeah, there’s some things we can do and try to make a little bit better. But, you know, having an ethical elected officials — you would hope you elect them anyway — and that they do the right thing.”*

The Second Regular Session of the 98th General Assembly will start at noon on Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2016.

And, remember, you can follow these and other issues facing the Missouri Senate — plus, see a complete list of prefiled legislation — by visiting our website: [senate.mo.gov](http://www.senate.mo.gov).

Reporting for the Missouri Senate, I’m Dean Morgan.