



STATE OF ARKANSAS

House of Representatives

Arkansas House Newsletter

December 28, 2012

Final Column from Speaker Robert S. Moore, Jr.

This week, I am in the process of a bitter-sweet task as I pack up my belongings from the office of the Speaker of the House. The new Speaker will need this space to prepare for the challenging session that lies ahead.

The Speaker's office is on the third floor of the Capitol. The window offers a spectacular view of the rolling hillsides and a glimpse of the Arkansas River. So I, along with every Speaker before me, have constantly been reminded of our magnificent resources. There are many memories here. I am proud to say at one time or another all 99 members came in here and told me about issues important to them.

I appreciate every single member for allowing me the opportunity to serve this great state. And I am forever humbled and grateful to those back home who sent me here. I walk away with the satisfaction that together we made meaningful progress.

The work we accomplished is making your drive to work safer, is transforming criminals into productive members of society, and will protect our fragile and valuable water supplies for decades to come.

The 88th General Assembly put forward a constitutional amendment to allow voters an opportunity to improve our highways. With overwhelming support, voters approved a temporary ½ cent sales tax which will not only connect all 4 corners of our state with 4-lane roads, but will in the process support 40,000 new jobs and help bring hundreds of thousands of dollars to your cities and counties to repair roads.

By working together we passed Act 570, a justice reform measure that has state leaders around the nation asking us how we did it. Back-up at county jails are down to their lowest levels since 1998. And in just over a year since it took effect, 1,000 fewer offenders have their parole revoked.

The Arkansas Natural Resources Commission is now in the process of determining just how much water is in our state and what we need to do to ensure it is there for our great-grandchildren. This task could not have been done without funding. I am proud this legislature saw fit to make protecting this resource a top priority.

We were also able to lower grocery tax and taxes on manufacturing at a time when other states were cutting services and raising taxes.

Throughout my time in office, the people back home in District 12 were always in the forefront of my decision making. My hope was the rest of the state and even tourists across the country would come discover the distinct beauty and culture of our region. That's why I worked diligently to have the Delta Heritage Trail extended to Arkansas City. Once completed, the Delta Heritage Trail will offer sweeping views from bridges that span the Arkansas River and the White River.

Tourism is a 5.5 billion dollar industry in the Natural State. And other industries are drawn like a magnet to communities with places for visitors to stop and places to stay. It sends a signal to the rest of the world about the quality of life we enjoy. As I leave, I sincerely hope we all embrace this concept.

The legislature will continue to do its part to better our state, but I'd like to take this final opportunity to remind Arkansans to do yours. It is truly disheartening to see the natural beauty of our state blemished with litter. It sends a message to others that we don't care. So please take care of Arkansas. I know I will do my best to do the same long after I leave this office.