Missouri Legislative Update - Veto Session
By Nancy Giddens, Shannon Cooper, and Jessica Land

The 2012 veto session kicked off in Jefferson City on Wednesday, September 12, 2012. State Senators and Representatives were back in their Capitol offices for what was an interesting day of debate and sentimental goodbyes for some.

Override in the Legislature
SB 749, passed earlier this year only to be vetoed by Governor Nixon shortly after adjournment. This bill allows religious and moral exemptions to cover contraception in health insurance policies. Governor Nixon, citing concerns with personal freedoms and reproductive rights, urged his fellow Democrats to support his veto. Despite the Governor’s wishes, it took little time before the Senate passed the override motion by a 26-6 margin. The House debate, however, proved far more contentious and time consuming with the bill passing only by the constitutional required 2/3 margin (109-45). Immediately after the bill was overridden by the legislature, the Greater Kansas City Coalition of Labor Union Women filed a lawsuit in the Cole County Court stating that the bill is in violation of the federal Affordable Care Act. Many observers believe that the true intent of the legislation was to pit the state’s rights against federal law – the winner of which will be decided by the courts.

Round 2: Tax Credit Review Commission
The Governor-appointed Tax Credit Review Commission met briefly Wednesday to revisit its 2010 recommendations. While all tax credit programs were reviewed, most scrutiny falls upon two programs: historic preservation and low income housing. Mirroring earlier meetings, reform such as caps, efficiencies, sunsets, and transferability were all discussed. There is much hope across the state that due to term limits and new legislative members a compromise can be reached and new economic development tools will be created to help improve Missouri’s stagnant economy.

Moving Forward
The Capitol environment was more friendly and carefree than usual this week. Retiring and/or departing Senators and Representatives said their goodbyes as most will not return to the Capitol as elected officials.

It is that time of year again!
The Chamber is in the process of developing its 2013 public policy agenda for Missouri. This is your chance to present issues to the full committee for consideration. Only one hearing will be held this year so make sure to sign up. Missouri Public Policy Agenda Hearing, Friday, October 19, 11:30 a.m., The Chamber’s Board Room. Presentation forms are due by Friday, October 5. For more information or to RSVP, e-mail muffitt@kcchamber.com.