

For Immediate Release
January 17, 2006

Contact: Judi Roman
314.647.9232

New Statewide Advocacy Group Created: Consumers Council of Missouri To Restore Balance Between Consumers, Business Interests

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – Saying consumer interests are being ignored in lieu of a well-financed lobby for big business, officials with a new consumer advocacy group announced today in Jefferson City the creation of the Consumers Council of Missouri.

Organized to educate and empower consumers statewide and to advocate for their interests, its leaders hope the Consumers Council will begin to restore the historic balance between consumer and business interests. Although the group will not represent individual consumers, it is a membership organization and will work for the common interests of all Missouri consumers. The Consumers Council of Missouri is a non-governmental, non-profit organization, and is loosely modeled on the Utility Consumers Council of Missouri which was active in the 1970s.

John Coffman, interim president of the organization, said: “Ordinary Missouri consumers have been seriously disenfranchised over the past few years. They desperately need a strong voice that will stand up to big industry schemes. This year, our organization will be focusing attention on three strategic areas: energy, finance and insurance. We will do what needs to be done to make consumer voices heard. We are a fledgling group,” he concluded, “but we expect to grow quickly.”

- more -

Consumers Council/add one

Board Member Alberta Slavin, former president of the Utility Consumers Council of Missouri said: "In many ways this new group is like a re-birth of the old organization. Although our former focus was limited to utilities, we were able to make significant changes in how consumers were billed and the rates they were charged. There is great power in the united voice of people who want change."

Jacqueline Hutchinson, another Board Member, said: "This group will be especially important for people who don't have information, resources or time to monitor issues that impact them economically. Since consumer problems affect all economic levels we are all in the same boat when things go wrong." Hutchinson explained that the Consumers Council will research legislation and testify at public hearings in Jefferson City and across the state.

In addition, the Consumers Council of Missouri will work with consumer experts to help keep the public informed and to analyze important issues in the areas of energy, insurance and finance. The organization plans to issue consumer alerts, write articles and produce an electronic newsletter. The organization has an office in St. Louis and will have regional committees representing other areas of the state. The Consumers Council will be recruiting individual members on an ongoing basis.

Anyone can become a member of Consumers Council of Missouri. General membership dues are just \$10 annually. For more information on the Consumers Council of Missouri, or to become a member, visit the organization's website at www.moconsumers.org.

-end -