

MISSOURI'S ELECTED OFFICIALS

MISSOURI'S SUPERPOWER—THE GOVERNOR

Some fun and interesting facts:

1. Before Missouri became a state and was a territory, both Meriwether Lewis and William Clark served as territorial governors.
2. When the Civil War broke out, Claiborne Jackson was governor. He left the office when Union Soldiers came to Jefferson City and declared Missouri as a Union State and went to fight for the Confederacy.
3. Former governor Sterling Price became a general in the Confederate Army.
4. Two governors—Phil Donnelly (1945-49, 1953-57) and Christopher Bond (1973-77, 1981-85) lost their bid for re-election after serving one term and then won a second term four years later.
5. Warren Hearnes served two terms as governor (1965-73) and then his wife, Betty, ran unsuccessfully for office in the 1980s.
6. The last convicted felon pardoned by a governor was Johnny Lee Wilson by Governor Mel Carnahan.
7. The governor may serve only two terms of office.
8. The governor, as are almost all state officials, elected in November at the time of the presidential elections.

It is highly unlikely that you will see a caped crusader flying around the State Capitol with the words *Governor of Missouri* emblazoned on his chest, but by law the governor of Missouri is our superpower. The Missouri Constitution actually says, “The supreme executive power is vested in a governor.”

Exactly what kinds of things does someone with “supreme executive power” do? The Constitution simply says that the governor must make sure that the laws of our state are obeyed and that the governor is in charge of keeping Missouri a peaceful place. But there is nothing simple about this job. Missouri has thousands of laws about health, education, crimes, taxes, business, prisons, roads, the environment and many other topics. The governor has 16 departments that help him do this job, like the Department of Transportation and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. These departments have hundreds of employees all over that state that the governor is responsible for. The governor also has the job of appointing a variety of judges for the courts and can pardon someone who has been convicted of committing a crime.

Learning Extensions

1. Go to www.state.mo.us for more information on the office of governor and a description of the various departments in the executive branch.
2. In the executive branch, only the governor and state treasurer are restricted to serving two terms of office. The secretary of state, the lieutenant governor, the auditor and the attorney general can serve as many terms as they want. Do you agree with these terms limits for the governor? Why or why not? What are the advantages and disadvantages?
3. Visit www.state.mo.us and look at the list of the sixteen departments in the executive branch. Choose one department and make a power point presentation on the various duties and activities of the department.

Qualifications for a Governor:

- **Be at least 30 years of age.**
- **Be a citizen of United States for 15 years.**
- **Be a resident of Missouri for 10 years before the election.**