



GOVERNOR OF MISSOURI  
JEFFERSON CITY  
65102

JEREMIAH W. (JAY) NIXON  
GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 720  
(573) 751-3222

Contact: Scott Holste, (573) 751-0290  
[Scott.Holste@mo.gov](mailto:Scott.Holste@mo.gov)

Channing Ansley, (573) 751-0290  
[Channing.Ansley@mo.gov](mailto:Channing.Ansley@mo.gov)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Gov. Nixon appoints longtime assistant prosecutor as Associate Circuit Judge for 16<sup>th</sup> Circuit (Jackson County)**

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – **Gov. Jay Nixon** today appointed **Jeffrey C. Keal** as Associate Circuit Judge for the Sixteenth Judicial Circuit, which covers Jackson County. He will fill a vacancy on the circuit created by the retirement of the **Honorable Vernon Scoville III**.

Keal has served with the Jackson County Prosecuting Attorney's Office in Independence since 1991. Among his responsibilities, Keal oversees the criminal traffic unit, a high volume docket that routinely has more than 600 cases. Through this unit, he has implemented the Youthful Traffic Offenders Program to deter speeding, drunken driving, and texting while driving by young drivers. Keal also recently established an Education Court in eastern Jackson County, with Fort Osage High School as the first school in the program. Because of the connection between crime and a lack of education, the goal of the program is to work with parents and guardians to keep students in school.

Before joining the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, Keal was in private practice for five years. He holds his undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Missouri – Kansas City. He has been active in his church and in coaching and supporting organized youth sports in eastern Jackson County.

"Jeff Keal has extensive experience and skills in many areas of the law that the Associate Circuit Court oversees," **Gov. Nixon** said. "The citizens of Jackson County will benefit from having that experience and those skills on the bench, and I am pleased to appoint him as an Associate Circuit Judge."

Keal was one of three applicants submitted to Gov. Nixon for consideration by the 16th Circuit Judicial Commission under the Missouri Nonpartisan Court Plan.

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