

'Critical incident' response guidelines may be closed

YOU play a key role in this effort

By the time this lands on your desk, the holiday season will be over and 2013 will stretch before us, full of potential. And, as usual, it means that shortly the Missouri legislature will be back in session for another term.

One of the first issues that I suspect we'll see arise during the session is related to a little present Santa has left in your stocking that I don't want you to miss.

Beginning Jan. 1, you have a window of opportunity to make sunshine law requests for access to guidelines and policies relating to how law enforcement responds to a "critical incident" (see Section 610.021.18). You also have the ability to request information on existing or proposed security systems and structural plans of real property either in government hands or similar records being held by government entities that may be assisting in protecting those structures (see Section 610.021.19).

IF YOU WANT THIS INFORMATION, MAKE YOUR REQUEST NOW.

I fear this window of opportunity will slam shut pretty quickly. Over the next few weeks, there will be many stories written about how law enforcement is dealing with shootings in public places, and this information may be important to your stories.

This information will not be open for long, for officials in the state Department of Public Safety are already working to have bills introduced closing these records. No doubt, as the bill moves through the House and Senate, it will come with an emergency clause, so once signed by the governor, it will be effective immediately. So don't delay.

Missouri Press has requested that this bill include once again a sunset provision in an effort to continue having this issue reviewed on a regular basis. We have looked at the proposed language that will be presented this year and have worked to be certain that it is clearly written and as limited as possible, in order to ensure that the amount of records closed under these exceptions is narrowly drawn.

Meanwhile, we are hoping for a larger sunshine bill to get a hearing this session. The association is working with prospective sponsors and reports will be regularly issued as to progress.

As usual, YOU play a key role in this effort. Once a bill is introduced, that information will be

available to you so that you can lend support. Editorials are helpful, explaining why the changes being suggested are important.

When you get emails requesting you to contact your legislators to ask them to support a bill, it is terribly important that you make those calls. Hearing from you, their constituents, that this is important to you, helps win their support



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of these changes.

If you have time to come testify on a bill, let me or Doug Crews at MPA know and we'll keep you informed as to when hearings will be held.

Be sure to come to Jefferson City for the annual Day at the Capitol in February, and talk to your legislators then. Don't hesitate, in addition, to catch your local legislators when they are home on weekends and bend their ears about this subject.

Every time you make that connection, you give our bill a little "push" toward passage.

Finally, I mentioned last month that my office will have relocated by the time you read this. Many of you contact me by phone or email, and none of that will change.

But perhaps it would be a good idea to make this note of my new physical address: The Maneke Law Group, L.C., 420 Nichols Road, Ste. 200, Kansas City, MO 64112.

We're right in the heart of the Country Club Plaza, just a few steps away from the Apple Store there (I know you guys. I doubt there's a PC sitting in any office of my readers out there). You'll have to come say "hello" next time you are down there.

Wishing all of us a wonderful 2013!

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Mistrial in killing of St. Louis American staffer

After deliberating over two days, jurors went home Dec. 7 unable to decide whether Rico R. Paul is guilty of first-degree murder and other charges in the killing of an employee of *The St. Louis American* on May 9, 2011.

The judge declared a mistrial, and Paul was held for a retrial.

Paul Reiter, 27, circulation manager for *The American*, had dialed 911, ostensibly to report seeing a burglar next

door to his home at about 10 a.m. He was shot dead before completing the call.

Eyewitnesses identified Paul as Reiter's killer, but the defense presented two alibi witnesses and claimed police forced Paul to confess. Paul also faces 20 counts of burglary and theft in a string of other crimes in the neighborhood. He is serving a prison term for violating probation for an earlier robbery and assault. (*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*)