

Senator Stouffer On "Smoother, Safer, Sooner" Road Plan

"As a member of the transportation committee this week focused on access to safer roads and bridges-- constituents passionate about the OATS programs visited our office, and the legislature heard the "State of the State of Transportation."

MoDot has devised a plan that will help Missouri's roads become safer and more accommodating to the public. The first plan, "Smoother, Safer, Sooner" has three elements that will be completed within the next three years. MoDot also produces a STIP every year which is a five year plan.

All elements in "Smoother, Safer Sooner" will be started by 2007. The first element is the smoother roads initiative. There will be 2,200 miles of repaved road. The cost of the initiative includes almost \$8 million for the 21st Senate District.

The second element includes acceleration projects. These 55 projects were scheduled to begin within the next five years, but will be starting much sooner. This element includes a little over \$19 million to the 21st Senate District.

Under this project Ray County will see the paving of a 4-lane highway from Route 10 to Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad. Cooper County will have a resurfacing of eastbound lanes and shoulders from Route 87 east to the Missouri River Bridge. Also, a resurfacing of the westbound lanes and shoulders from the Missouri River Bridge to Route 87.

The last element of the plan is an additional \$1.3 billion in additional bond-financed funding. The projects will be decided in the spring after planning meetings with local communities, legislators, and MoDot officials.

The STIP (Statewide Transportation Improvement Program) includes projects that are to be started in the next five years. This plan includes bridges and highways. Seventy-one projects are within the Senate District. The projects will bring \$218 million to the district to repair roads.

Most of us have had our disappointment with MoDot in the past but with the community, legislature and MoDot working together we can make Missouri roads better. These plans do not just save lives on our highways; they bring jobs to Missouri. Yes, some of the 15 year plan is not being completed, but 92 percent of the projects come from the plan. The two programs are focused more on the concern of each community.

MoDot is still asking for input for the third element of “Smoother, Safer Sooner.” If you have any suggestions you can let my office know. Also, if you would like to know more specifics about either of the two plans you can call my office or go to www.modot.org.

If you have questions or comments about this issue or any other issues please contact my office toll free at (866) 768-3987 or by email at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.