



New Year Brings Reflection and Resolve

JEFFERSON CITY — The end of the year offers us the opportunity to reflect on the events of the past 12 months and how they have affected our lives. At the same time, we can look forward to a new year full of new hopes and ambitions. As we make our New Year's resolutions, we affirm our belief that we can make our lives and the world around us better through self-improvement and community involvement. The holidays and new year remind us of the qualities that are so important to us all — those of faith, humility and goodwill to our neighbors.

Like so many years before, 2006 saw highs and lows, achievement and tragedy. Missourians were saddened by the Sago Mine tragedy and the inhuman shooting rampage at an Amish school in Pennsylvania. We displayed grit and determination after the severe storms of July and early December caused widespread destruction and power outages in our state. We were filled with national pride with the launch of the space shuttles Discovery and Atlantis and with the continued healing of the Gulf Coast after the devastating hurricanes of 2005. The arrests of 21 terrorist conspirators in London and nuclear tests in North Korea forged in Americans and their neighbors international solidarity. Meanwhile, Warren Buffett's donation of \$30 billion to charity furthered the American philanthropic tradition, and the Cardinals' improbable World Series run gave us something to cheer about at the end of the day.

However, nothing has stirred us like our men and women of the military serving in Iraq. As our American heroes risk their lives overseas to protect our freedoms at home, each of us is grateful and wishes them a safe return to their friends and family back home. As we count our blessings with the coming of the new year and the passing of the old, do not forget these courageous Americans and the sacrifices they continue to make.

I want to wish a happy New Year's to everyone in the 2nd Senate District. Topping my list of resolutions is the promise to serve you to the best of my ability as I return to Jefferson City for a new legislative session. And I hope you will also set goals to do right for yourself, and for others.

If you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by phone at (866) 271-2844.

###