



# SENATOR MATT BARTLE

**District 8 – Capitol Building, Room 431 Jefferson City, MO 65101**

**Column for Week of:  
Aug. 14, 2006**

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## **Improving Missouri's Roads – A Critically Important Mission**

One of the top issues facing the State of Missouri is the condition of our highways. Missouri has one of the largest networks of state-maintained highways in the nation, and keeping these roads up to par is a critically important task. Not only do quality roads help improve commerce in the Show-Me State, they also help make travelers safer.

I am pleased to report that progress is being made thanks to the Smooth Roads Initiative. This week's column will look at those developments. Next week we'll examine the reasons why more needs to be done to bring Missouri's roads into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Missouri Department of Transportation's (MoDOT) Smoother, Safer, Sooner campaign has made significant headway in its first phase, the Smooth Roads Initiative. This first step will ultimately result in 2,200 miles of better-quality pavement and shoulders and safer guard rails and lane dividers on Missouri's busiest roads. In an effort to examine the progress of road construction, MoDOT officials have begun the "Seat of Your Pants" Tour to inspect the state's busiest highways.

Over the next two months, highway engineers will examine roadways that are being upgraded by the end of the year. Officials will be looking for the same things drivers are concerned about — smoother pavement, brighter stripes and better signs. MoDOT is calling it the "Seat of Your Pants" Tour because they will judge the quality of roads the same way drivers do — by how it feels in the seat of your pants.

MoDOT engineers will inspect the roads included in the Smooth Roads Initiative — roads and highways that will be brought up to good condition using \$1.7 billion in Amendment 3 revenues approved by voters in November 2004. Three-fourths of these roadways were in fair to poor condition at the beginning of 2005, when the initiative started, and the department promised to bring them all up to good condition by the end of 2007. However, the governor challenged MoDOT to complete the work a year early, so the agency now plans to complete the work by the end of this year.

The Kansas City area has already seen significant progress. Workers have laid more than 481,000 tons of asphalt to repair more than 44,000 square yards of pavement. New center stripes crown 110 miles of upgraded roads. Under the Smooth Roads Initiative, the Kansas City area will have 490 miles of road in good condition, and several projects have been completed already, including one major initiative on Interstate 70.

MoDOT is living up to its promise of improving Missouri's most highly traveled roads and highways. By keeping tabs on progress, officials are hoping to ensure that they will meet the deadlines they have imposed.

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 e-mail at [matt\\_bartle@senate.mo.gov](mailto:matt_bartle@senate.mo.gov) or by phone at (888) 711-9278.

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