

# **Report from Senator David G. Klindt**

## *February 23, 2006*

### *Looking ahead*

Last harvest season I was dismayed to see farmers spending \$400 or more to fill the combine with diesel fuel every morning. And then, on top of that, knowing farmers were required to pay sales tax on that diesel fuel was like adding salt to the wound.

The combination of high fuel prices, skyrocketing fertilizer costs and low commodity prices produced a disappointing year on the farm.

This week, we took a step in the Missouri Senate to provide a little bit of relief for the agriculture community. One of my top priorities this year passed the Senate and is on its way to the House. SB 744 removes the sales tax from farm fuel. I'm grateful to my Senate colleagues for helping me move this bill along.

I filed a bill this week called the "Broadband Internet Protection Act." It's an effort to make sure cities and other political subdivisions don't start erecting roadblocks to the advancement of Internet technology in Missouri. The bill prohibits cities from regulating the content, cost, or distribution of material over a broadband Internet connection and also prohibits them from taxing it.

As technology continues its rapid advancement, the old rules concerning things like cable television no longer make sense. Right now, some of the same programming available on cable TV systems is available for download by anyone with a fast enough Internet connection. Next month, CBS is offering every game of the NCAA basketball tournament over the Internet in real time.

As these advances continue, my fear is that the bureaucrats at city hall will try to step in and put a tax on such services. That would be a huge mistake, and the "Broadband Internet Protection Act" is designed to look ahead and prevent it.

In a somewhat related matter, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Energy and the Environment, which I chair, voted this week to send SB 816 to the floor. This is the bill that creates a statewide franchising system for video providers. It's an effort to expedite the roll-out of Internet Protocol Television, an important technological advancement that has great potential to benefit consumers.

Finally, the General Assembly gave final approval this week to a bill cracking down on those tasteless protests we've seen take place at military funerals. In particular, the bill is named in honor of a soldier from St. Joseph who was killed in Iraq last year. At his funeral, some misguided protestors from Kansas called his death divine retribution for America being too tolerant.

I can tolerate a lot of things, but a tasteless protest at the funeral of an American soldier isn't one of them. I commend my colleague, Sen. Charlie Shields of St. Joseph, for bringing this bill forward.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul G. Shill". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and "S".