



Gibbons Capitol Report
September 21, 2006

Going Green Using Corn

My hometown has a great annual event known as the Greentree Festival. It started more than 40 years ago when disease wiped out the beautiful elm trees that lined the neighborhoods in Kirkwood. The city wanted to replace the lost trees and the annual event was built from that campaign. This year, I joined in the Greentree parade, but rather than focusing on politics, I wanted to share a message that took the Greentree theme to heart: to encourage parade-goers to support alternative fuels.

Corn Powered Cars

We got a lot of looks and many cheers of support along the parade route as people saw the white SUV wrapped in graphics of corn fields, reminding people that many vehicles manufactured today run on E-85, a cleaner blend of 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent unleaded gasoline. Only flex fuel vehicles (FFV) can run on E-85, and many are being built in Missouri. The new F-150 FFV trucks you see advertised are assembled in Missouri at a plant in Kansas City. Chrysler, who recently made a \$1 billion dollar commitment in two plants in St. Louis County, announced their plans to launch 250,000 flex fuel vehicles in 2007. The flex fuel option will be available on the company's Jeep Commander, Sebring convertible, Dodge Dakota, Ram, and Durango; as well as the Dodge Caravan and Chrysler Town & Country minivans.

Energy Independence

Missouri farmers produce more than 300 million bushels of corn every year. Three ethanol plants are already running in Missouri, and a fourth is set to open Monday. We can depend on Missouri farmers to move closer to energy independence in our fuel supply.

Bringing E-85 Home

There are dozens of fuel pumps across Missouri that offer E-85. Unfortunately, none of those pumps are in St. Louis County. That needs to change. All Missourians should have the opportunity to fuel up flex fuel cars and trucks no matter where they live.

There are many benefits to using ethanol to power our cars. Not only is it unquestionably better for the environment, the corn grown to make ethanol comes straight from Missouri farmers, creating jobs here at home and making sure we make the best use of our state's vast agricultural resources. Ethanol has the potential to be a part of Missouri's economic

engine, and there is no more environmentally friendly way to begin our path to energy independence.