



Gibbons Capitol Report  
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### **Working Together: Rural and Urban Missouri**

As Thanksgiving approaches many of us can be caught daydreaming of turkey and our favorite sides, but what you may not realize is that much of your meal could have been produced here in Missouri. Missouri's largest industry is agriculture at more than \$6 billion a year. As president pro tem, I have had the opportunity to travel our state to learn more about what drives this industry and how both rural and urban Missouri can work together to benefit everyone.

#### **Protecting Homes, Farms and Businesses**

This year, rural and urban interests came together on two big issues that benefit everyone. First, we came together to put property owners' rights before economic development. The new law limiting eminent domain protects our homes, farms and businesses and provided for just compensation in the rare cases where land is taken. Farmland cannot be blighted and families that have owned the same property for more than 50 years will automatically receive 150 percent of fair market value. Plus, property owners will be notified much earlier when a utility or MoDOT looks at acquiring an easement.

#### **Using Corn to Power Our Cars**

The second issue rural and urban interests came together on was using corn to power our cars. On Jan. 1, 2008, all gasoline sold in Missouri will be blended with 10 percent ethanol. Missouri farmers produce more than 300 million bushels of corn every year. The corn grown to make ethanol comes straight from our farmers, creating jobs here at home. Having homegrown fuel also allows us to depend less on foreign oil. Plus, everyone benefits from a cleaner environment, as the ethanol blend produces 13 percent less greenhouse gases. But it doesn't stop there. Ethanol produces a bi-product known as DDG which is a feed that has very high nutritional values for cattle.

#### **Working Together**

Great things can happen that benefit the people of Missouri when rural and urban interests work together. I believe that if we continue to build on these successes and cooperation Missouri will be a national leader and the hub of America. Many of the chips are already in place. We are geographically the heart of America. We have two major metropolitan areas, one on the east and one on the west. These cities are flanked by American's leading crop and cattle producers. We have two major rivers, an extensive

transportation system and advanced plant and animal life science research centers. Our universities and private corporations are leaders in agriculture technology.

Farming is one of the only industries that purchases its input at retail and sells the end product at wholesale, yet, the future of agriculture in Missouri is bright. The Senate Agriculture Committee leaders are planning a series of hearings across Missouri this December. Join them in shaping the vision of Missouri agriculture in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. By working together, we can transcend an urban-rural divide and make Missouri a better place for all of us.