



# THE STOUFFER REPORT

**Senator Bill Stouffer**  
Senate District 21

**Capitol Building, Room 332**  
Jefferson City, MO 65101

**For the Week of:**  
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## **DREAM Initiative is Excellent Opportunity for Communities**

Bustling downtown business districts have become a rare find in Rural Missouri since World War II. A changing economy and transportation system have moved people to more “high-traffic” areas, and larger stores are meeting the needs of a fast-paced society. This has left many towns wondering what to do with vacant buildings and deteriorating infrastructure while balancing local economic needs and honoring taxpayers.

However, community leaders have displayed a resurgent interest and pride in maintaining and enlivening their business districts to make even the smallest downtowns a better place to work and live. It is hoped that this will also help increase local economic activity in Rural Missouri and keep our tax dollars closer to home, rather than going toward large shopping malls and retail centers elsewhere.

A plan announced this week by Gov. Blunt will do much to further those efforts in Missouri. The Downtown Revitalization Economic Assistance for Missouri (DREAM) Initiative will help communities more efficiently and effectively engage in downtown revitalization efforts. Under the plan, the Missouri Department of Economic Development, the Missouri Development Finance Board and the Missouri Housing Development Commission will work together to create a comprehensive and collaborative approach to downtown revitalization. DREAM communities will first work with the finance board to develop a plan for downtown revitalization and will then have enhanced access to professional services and programs available through the partner agencies. The available programs can help address a multitude of community needs, including infrastructure improvements, historic preservation, affordable housing, community services, business development and job creation.

Six to 10 Missouri communities will be selected through an application process and designated DREAM communities. They will remain DREAM communities for three years.

The DREAM Initiative is targeted at breaking down the barriers to redevelopment and revitalization for Missouri's communities. It will save taxpayer dollars at the state and local levels by offering a more efficient use of Missouri's tools for redevelopment while concentrating resources and eliminating red tape for communities. The program will also speed up the process of downtown revitalization and spur economic growth in selected Missouri communities.

I encourage communities in the 21<sup>st</sup> District to apply for this important program. For more information on the DREAM Initiative or to download an application and program guidelines, visit [www.dream.mo.gov](http://www.dream.mo.gov). Applications are due by 5 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 1, 2006, to DREAM Initiative Applications, P.O. Box 118, 301 W. High Street, Room 680, Jefferson City, MO 65102.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by email at [bstouffer@senate.mo.gov](mailto:bstouffer@senate.mo.gov).

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