



A Transportation Plan for Lincoln County

JEFFERSON CITY — Transportation safety has been a major concern in the public eye in recent weeks. From the tragic deaths of young children on Highway 61 in Lincoln County to a Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) worker being struck and killed in Chesterfield Valley, we are all aware that our roads are dangerous places to travel, and we must all take precaution. Citizens of Lincoln County gathered last week to see what they, in conjunction with MoDOT and state officials, could do to raise public awareness and to enact safety measures along their most traveled highway.

More than 100 people filled the room in Moscow Mills to hear an update of all the construction projects and safety enhancements underway or planned for Highway 61. The citizens urged a lowering of the speed limit near the dangerous Mette Road/Highway U intersection, and MoDOT is conducting speed studies to determine the speed to which it should be lowered. Overall, the crowd expressed concern, frustration, and anxiety.

One citizen put it all in perspective. "Lincoln County is exactly where Jefferson County and St. Charles County was 15 years ago." That statement is correct. The reason Jefferson County and St. Charles County have handled the growth is that they put together a long range transportation vision and worked together with local, state, and federal officials to see that their plan was implemented. Highway 21 in Jefferson County and the Page Avenue Extension in St. Charles County are proof that these plans are essential to handling the growth that these counties experienced.

A citizen's advisory committee, in conjunction with MoDOT and local elected officials, is the first step to putting together a vision for transportation in Lincoln County to handle the growth that has started and will continue. I will ensure that MoDOT is doing all that it possibly can to provide safety enhancements to Highway 61 and other areas of Lincoln County. The state is working on a transportation package that will be presented to the voters in 2009, and we are still designing the package and identifying projects.

Getting input from all interested parties and working together as a team for one vision of transportation in Lincoln County is essential. I was extremely pleased at the transportation forum last week, and I am encouraged at the local interest in helping solve this problem.

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 phone at (866) 271-2844.

###