



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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A Weekly Column for the
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Diary of a State Senator

JEFFERSON CITY – How about those Missouri Tigers! I was very fortunate to find a few tickets and took a couple of my kids to the big game in Kansas City. We have family in Kansas City, so we had Thanksgiving dinner Sunday after Mizzou whomped the Jayhawks – it just doesn't get any better than that!

I know a lot of folks think legislators go to Jefferson City for the first five months of the year and then forget about all of that until the next session rolls around, but in reality, our work continues year-round. I thought I'd tell you about how I spent my last two weeks just to give you a better idea of what this job entails, which is why I titled this column "Diary of a State Senator."

Monday, November 19: I met with David Hale and John Grossmeyer of the Missouri Hospital Association to get their perspective on Insure Missouri and Mo HealthNet. Insure Missouri is the governor's plan to help low-income Missourians buy health insurance, and I want to make sure the folks in northeast Missouri can get coverage. Right now there's just one bidder for the program in the 18th Senatorial District and our hospitals are not included in the provider network of that bidder. Health care insurance does no good if there are no services provided, so we might need to pass some language requiring hospitals to provide services if a patient has insurance.

Wednesday, November 21: Bob Zeimer and Bill White from the Missouri Department of Conservation came up and toured my farm. I want to make sure that when conservation officials implement programs they honor the efforts of private landowners who are preserving wildlife habitat. With land going for two to three thousand an acre, it won't be long before the

bulldozers start moving in, and I just want the conservation department to have an aggressive program to preserve that habitat and to give credit to the private landowners who hold that habitat. I sent both of them home with some turnips.

Friday, November 23: I met with the board of directors of the sheltered workshop in Kirksville to discuss their concerns about the wages the state provides for workers. Missouri's 93 sheltered workshops employ nearly 8,000 disabled people and close to 900 non-disabled individuals. They contribute greatly to the state's commerce and to the well-being of the communities they serve. We passed legislation to increase funding for the folks who work in sheltered workshops and now we need to make sure we follow through by providing the extra money.

Monday, November 26: I visited the Missouri Rural Enterprise Center at Truman State University to talk about strategies for economic development in rural Missouri and how the city, county and university have partnered together to turn research into business opportunities. They're just getting started and I wanted to get their take on how rural lawmakers can help stimulate economic development in rural Missouri.

Tuesday, November 27: I attended MoDOT's ribbon cutting ceremony for the completion of the 27-mile stretch of Highway 63 between Kirksville and Macon to four lanes. This is a unique situation because it's the first time folks have taken it upon themselves to tax themselves for highway improvements. The Highway 63 Coalition realized the importance of the roadway to their children's safety and future economic development and partnered with MoDOT to get the work done.

Tuesday night we went to Bowling Green to attend the annual meeting of the Northeast Community Action Corporation. Their name says it all – Community Action – helping folks by giving them a hand up and not just a hand out. They're doing great work to help people get on the right track, and at their dinner they recognized the employees who have dedicated their lives to helping others, and I really appreciate their efforts.

Wednesday, November 28: I and other Democratic lawmakers from northeast Missouri met with the Missouri Cattlemen's Association, the Pork Producers, MFA and MOAG Industries to listen to their concerns. We don't always agree on everything, but it's important to listen to each other in an effort to find common ground.

Friday/Saturday, November 30, December 1: I attended the Missouri Livestock Symposium at Kirksville. Being a farmer who raises cattle and hogs, I'm interested in the latest innovations, not only on the production side, but finding opportunities to work together

with your neighbors to create marketing opportunities. We passed House Bill 888 which allows farmers to come together to create new generation coops. I think this is a great way to make our operations sustainable and profitable into the future. This is a great place to exchange knowledge and look for new ideas, and it's a chance to rekindle those old friendships while you're there.

So I've been putting a lot of miles on the old Ford because it's important to get out and talk to people about what's on their minds. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to serve the good folks of northeast Missouri.

If you have any questions or comments about this or any other issue, give my Capitol office a call at (573) 751-7852, send me an email at wes.shoemyer@senate.mo.gov, or drop a line to Room 434, State Capitol, 201 West Capitol Ave., Jefferson City, MO 65101.