



THE STOUFFER REPORT

Senator Bill Stouffer
Capitol Building, Room 332

Senate District 21
Jefferson City, MO 65101

For the Week of:
December 24, 2007

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“The Experience” — My Time Behind the Wheel of a Stock Car

Before 2007 came to a close, I was lucky enough to participate in the Richard Petty Driving Experience (RPDE) at the Kansas Speedway. For those of you who do not know what “the experience” is, I would have to rate it up there with the birth of my children and the day I married my beautiful wife Sue Ellen. Well, maybe I shouldn’t couple it with those memorable days, but the RPDE was a great experience.

“It began as the dream of one man; it was to become the fulfillment of a dream for thousands. After more than a decade of operation, Richard Petty Driving Experience has become the premiere motor sports entertainment company in the industry.” — *taken from the history of RPDE*

The RPDE was reshaped from a program that identified potential racecar drivers by helping to teach potential drivers the fundamentals of racing to a program that reflected what customers and NASCAR fans really wanted — the experience of driving or riding in a stock car at some of the most famous racing facilities in the world.

My sons provided the RPDE to me as a birthday gift. This truly eye-opening experience allowed me to see first-hand how industry professionals repaired and maintained the stock cars as well as how the overall mechanics of the vehicles worked. Participants had the opportunity to drive 600-horse power NASCAR-style stock cars that have four-speed manual transmissions.

No prior racing experience was required, and all participants were provided with a regulation helmet and safety device, as well as a driver’s suit. The top speed varies according to student performance. Since this was my first experience, I was allowed to go 140 mph.

After my time at the Kansas Speedway, I realized that this fast pace sporting event and our state Legislature have many things in common. A NASCAR race team is composed of many individuals, each with their own specialty, who contribute to the success of the team in a different way. The Missouri Legislature has the same mentality. Lawmakers from all walks of life make up the Missouri General Assembly — farmers, attorneys, teachers, Realtors, and business owners help make the legislative process run as smoothly as possible while providing the information from each of their diverse backgrounds to further benefit the people they serve.

The fast pace of a NASCAR event is also similar to the fast pace of a legislative session: the shop work and transportation to a racing event equates to prefiling bills in the Legislature; qualifying for a race is similar to work done in committee; the actual race (including pit stops) can be compared to the ups and down of debate on the floor of the Senate and House; and when the race is over and a bill crosses the finish line, lawmakers feel as if their bill had made it to victory circle.

I enjoy serving the 21st Senatorial District and I look forward to the next legislative session. I will continue to work for you and make sure that important legislation makes it to victory circle. If you have questions or comments about any issue, please call my office toll free (866) 768-3987 or send me an e-mail at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

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