



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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A Weekly Column for the
Week of June 23, 2008

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Board Works to Unite Job Seekers With Employers

JEFFERSON CITY – This week I want to talk about the work of the Missouri Workforce Investment Board, which met for a couple of days this week, but I first want to extend my hopes and prayers to folks along the river who are still dealing with flooding.

My staff and I have spent a lot of time during the past few weeks driving up and down the river to meet with local officials to see how we can help. Sometimes folks have just needed the immediate help of filling and placing sandbags, and we've pitched in to help whenever possible. I've also been talking to city and county officials to see how the state and federal governments can help these communities recover from this devastating flooding. Of course, we won't know how bad the damage is until the river finally crests and the floodwaters recede. Farmers are also taking a big hit this year due to flooding – levees have been breached up and down the river, flooding thousands of acres. Most farmers have insurance, so hopefully it won't be a total loss, but a lot of farmers and the communities they live in are going to have a tough time getting back on their feet. Like I mentioned last week, if you need information or assistance related to the flooding, call the State Emergency Management Agency at (573) 526-9136, or call my office at (573) 751-7852. For non-emergencies, call 211.

Most folks probably have never heard of the Missouri Workforce Investment Board (WIB) on which I serve. The board is made up of business leaders, educators, elected officials and local government officials. The state board and a number of regional boards across Missouri (like the Northeast Missouri Workforce Investment Board) were created in response to federal

legislation signed by President Clinton in 2000 that created the Workforce Investment Act. This act called for the creation of state and local workforce investment boards to coordinate the efforts of businesses, educators, and state and local governments to improve the local workforce through job training and job retraining, education and literacy programs, and employment services. The act is geared toward helping unemployed adults find meaningful jobs, toward helping dislocated workers find new employment, and toward helping young people finish their education and develop the skills needed in the workforce of today.

In order to attract new business and industry to Missouri, we must have a workforce that is ready to go to work. Texas might lose a large auto manufacturing plant because the skilled workforce they promised the company never materialized. The Missouri WIB intends to become active in preparing Missouri's workforce for any and all new opportunities that present themselves. We held a retreat this week to find out how the state board can best prepare Missouri workers. Although the board is advisory in nature, I believe we can have a real impact on public policy.

On a final note, I promised the farmers in northeast Missouri that I would do everything in my power to keep agriculture competitive. On July 12, I'm encouraging everyone to attend a public rally at Buzzard's Roost at Mark Twain State Park at 3 p.m. to talk about competition in the seed industry. Folks from the Organization for Competitive Markets, experts in all aspects of the seed industry, state lawmakers and local officials have been invited to talk about keeping agriculture competitive. I especially want to encourage our farmers to attend this rally – I think there will be a lot of valuable information available and they'll have a chance to talk face to face with some of the folks who work for them in Jefferson City. I've always said that farmers should have the right to retain their seed, so we'll see what we as legislators can do to ensure farmers have access to seed at a fair price.

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.

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