



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the
Week of June 30, 2008**

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Flood Recovery & the Fourth of July

JEFFERSON CITY – I hope folks in eastern Missouri who've been dealing with flooding for the last few weeks had a chance to take a break and enjoy their local Independence Day celebrations. In a lot of our small towns, the Fourth of July is still a community event, with parades and pie-eating contests and a big fireworks display when the sun sets. By the time you read this, the holiday will be over, but I hope the weather was nice where you live and that you were able to enjoy the festivities with your family and friends.

This week the Federal Emergency Management Agency announced it would be opening two disaster recovery centers in eastern Missouri to help folks affected by the flooding. Those centers will be located at the Clarksville Visitors Center and the Winfield-Foley Fire Station No. 3. FEMA is asking people to register for disaster assistance even if they have flood insurance. After they register, FEMA inspectors will check out their property once the floodwaters recede. Folks are encouraged to take pictures of the flood damage to their property and to save all receipts related to the cleanup effort. Flood victims can register online at www.fema.gov or by phone at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362).

Earlier this week I was invited by Senator Claire McCaskill (D-MO) to testify before the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging, which held a field hearing in St. Louis to discuss Medicare Advantage insurance plans. Some folks have bought these private insurance plans thinking they were buying Medigap supplement plans. I just want to make sure folks don't buy a pig in a poke. Make sure your health care provider has contracted with the Medicare Advantage plan before signing up because it doesn't do any good to have health insurance if you cannot get healthcare services.

Finally, the governor recently signed House Bill 2224 into law, which will increase the salaries of our deputy sheriffs, many of whom qualify for public assistance. We've been working on this problem for some time and I'm glad we were finally able to provide some relief to our hard-working deputy sheriffs. HB 2224 will increase deputy sheriff salaries statewide by increasing the fees sheriffs collect whenever they serve civil case summons or other court orders to the public to \$10. Those fees will be administered by the Missouri Sheriff Methamphetamine Relief Task Force, which will use a formula to ensure the money will go to rural communities where it is needed most.

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.