



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

Wes Shoemyer
18th Senate District

CAPITOL BUILDING, ROOM 434
JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65101

**A Weekly Column for the
Week of July 07, 2008**

**Contact: Kathy Armstrong
(573) 751-7852**

Help Available for Flood Victims

JEFFERSON CITY – Now that the floodwaters are receding it's time to assess the damage to farms, homes and businesses in northeast Missouri. This week I attended an informational meeting hosted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to find out what the federal and state governments are willing to do to help folks, and to find out how people affected by the flooding can apply for assistance. We still have to determine how much state money will be needed in addition to our federal matching dollars, and I will be working with state and local officials to see how to get it done.

Most people have until the end of July to register with the Federal Emergency Management Agency or SEMA in order to be eligible for assistance. The officials stressed to us the importance of gathering together all of your receipts and documents related to the flooding so people can get the help they need. FEMA and SEMA officials will be available to help people fill out the paperwork needed to receive recovery aid.

Basically, FEMA has broken the recovery effort into two categories. Category A includes debris removal — getting rid of sandbags and plastic used to hold back the rising river, and all of the flood-damaged debris from homes and businesses. Category B deals with reimbursing different groups and agencies for emergency protective measures — things like sandbagging and building up levees, setting up shelters, feeding flood victims, and all of the other steps taken to help folks during the actual flood.

The counties in northeast Missouri approved for all categories of federal assistance include Clark, Lewis, Marion, Ralls, Pike, Lincoln and St. Charles. To file an application for Disaster Assistance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency call:

1-800-621-3362

1-800-462-7585 (hearing impaired)

Or register on line: www.fema.gov

Citizens and businesses in declared counties can go to a Disaster Recovery Center to file an application for assistance, check on the status of their application, talk with representatives of the IRS, Social Security, Small Business Administration (SBA), or other state agencies about issues regarding flood recovery.

Currently the Disaster Recovery Centers are open 8 a.m. – 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Disaster Recovery Center Locations:

Pike County: Clarksville Visitors Center, 204 N 2nd Street, Clarksville; Lincoln County: Winfield-Foley Fire Department, 2663 E. Hwy 47, Winfield; Clark County: Clark County Middle School, 384 N Jefferson, Kahoka; Marion County: Chapel Hill Professional Bldg, 109 Virginia Street, Hannibal.

This week the new director of the Missouri Department of Agriculture, Don Steen, toured the flooded farms of northeast Missouri to assess the damage. Steen said that after viewing the devastation to crops and farmland, the department understands the economic challenges many farmers will be up against this year. He says the Ag Department will continue to work with the Missouri Farm Service Agency to do everything possible to help farmers in need. Steen, an Eldon farmer and former state representative, replaces Katie Smith, who is stepping down in anticipation of an expanding family. I want to wish Katie Smith and her husband all the best.

It's getting to be fair time in northeast Missouri, one of my favorite times of the year. By the time you read this, Shelby and Lewis counties will have held their annual livestock auctions and Ralls County is holding its livestock auction this Thursday. It's a great chance to get together with friends and family, and to eat some things that aren't really good for you but taste really good (nothing against funnel cakes!) I get a kick out of watching the young kids who have spent all year raising a steer lead it through its paces in the auction ring — you've never seen a prouder bunch of young farmers.

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.