



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the
Week of August 11, 2008**

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2-1-1

JEFFERSON CITY – During the height of the recent flooding in northeast Missouri, I suggested that people who needed assistance but did not have an immediate emergency call 2-1-1 for help. This week I wanted to tell you a little more about this valuable service offered by United Way of Missouri.

2-1-1 is a fast, free and confidential way to get help or to volunteer your services to those in need of assistance. Callers are put in touch with specialists who will evaluate their needs and refer them to local health or human services agencies. The United Way has trained staffers standing by 24 hours a day to answer questions and make referrals to appropriate agencies. Folks who want to volunteer their time to help others can also call 2-1-1 and they will be told which agencies are looking for help or where they can make a donation. If 2-1-1 is not yet active with your phone provider, or if you are using a cell phone or PBX line, you can reach the 2-1-1 call center by dialing (800) 427-4626. It's important to remember that the 2-1-1 call center is for non-emergencies; please call 9-1-1 if you have an emergency.

Currently the 2-1-1 call center is requesting donations for flood victims in northeast Missouri, including non-perishable food items; paper products, including toilet paper and paper towels; laundry detergent; rubber gloves; work gloves; insect repellent products, especially mosquito repellent; bottled water; box fans; Kilz paint. Please call United Way 2-1-1 if you are able to assist with these needs.

Missouri is the 21st state to offer this important service and I urge you to consider calling 2-1-1, whether it's to find the location of an emergency shelter during the next flood or to just learn about a summer camp program.

I also want to thank the governor for asking the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to approve a natural disaster declaration for agricultural losses due to the recent flooding. The governor is requesting 67 counties in Missouri be declared natural disasters, including Adair, Audrain, Clark, Knox, Lewis, Marion, Monroe, Pike, Putnam, Ralls, Schuyler, Scotland and Shelby counties in northeast Missouri.

I've spent quite a bit of time in Sedalia lately enjoying our Missouri State Fair. It's a pretty big deal for a lot of our young livestock producers to get to show their animals at the premier livestock show in the state, and I want to congratulate all of them on their hard work and dedication. I also attended the annual ham breakfast and had a chance to visit with some friends I haven't seen during the past year.

It's also back to school time and I had the privilege of seeing my son Andrew off to college this week. He's a freshman at State Fair Community College in Sedalia. As a parent, it's tough to see your child leave home, but you wish them well and hope they learned at least some of the things you tried to teach them over the years. Best of luck, Andrew, we're mighty proud of you.

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.