



# MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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18<sup>th</sup> Senate District

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**A Weekly Column for the  
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## Bridge Work and Other News

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JEFFERSON CITY – The Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission is beginning to move forward on the *Safe and Sound Bridge Improvement Program*. That's the plan to repair or replace more than 800 bridges throughout Missouri. Commission members say the program has been delayed due to the volatile financial markets over the past few months, but this week initiated the process for tackling 100 of the structures this coming spring. The commission plans to issue a detailed project timeline by October first.

After the tragic collapse of the Interstate 35 Bridge in Minneapolis in August 2007, in which 13 people died and 145 were injured, states across the nation began reassessing the safety of their bridges. Missouri's bridge plan was well underway by that time, but the Minnesota tragedy put added attention and urgency on the matter here in the Show-Me State.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> Senate District, 83 bridges are included on the overall list of 802 bridges to be repaired or replaced. That includes 9 bridges in Adair County, 8 in Audrain County, 8 in Clark County, 6 in Knox County, 3 in Lewis County, 4 in Marion County, 8 in Monroe County, 12 in Pike County, 4 in Putnam County, 7 in Ralls County, 5 in Schuyler County, 5 in Shelby County, and 4 in Scotland County.

On a related note, I attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony Thursday for a new Highway 136 bridge over the East Locust Creek near Livonia, in Putnam County.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has approved the state's request for a disaster declaration for Missouri counties as a result of losses caused by excessive rain and flooding from March 1 on. The disaster declaration will help farmers get low-interest loans from the Missouri Farm Service Agency to help them recover from crop losses. The 63 counties on the primary disaster area listing include all 13 counties in the 18<sup>th</sup> Senate District.

The community of Louisiana got some good news this week when it was named one of ten new DREAM communities. The Downtown Revitalization and Economic Assistance for Missouri initiative helps small towns get the same kind of economic assistance available to our larger cities. That assistance can be used to repair or improve infrastructure, for historic preservation, to build affordable housing, to expand community services as well as for business development and job creation.

I want to congratulate Hannibal-LaGrange College in Hannibal as it celebrates its 150<sup>th</sup> year, and I want to offer my congratulations to the Rural Advocates for Independent Living (RAIL) in Kirksville for 15 years of service to the community.

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](mailto:wes.shoemyer@senate.mo.gov), or drop a line to Room 434, State Capitol, 201 West Capitol Ave., Jefferson City, MO 65101.