



## MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the  
Week of Nov. 24, 2008**

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# Gearing Up For Session

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JEFFERSON CITY – I hope you had a chance to spend some quality time with your family and your friends over the long holiday weekend. For my colleagues and me in the legislature, this is the time of year we begin preparing for the session that begins in early January.

Missouri Senate rules allow members to pre-file bills on December 1<sup>st</sup>. By custom, each member of the senate, beginning with the most senior member, picks his or her top three priority bills and each bill is assigned a number. Typically, bills that are pre-filed and get a low number are more likely to pass because they are the first to be considered.

This year I plan to pre-file several bills, and I'll talk more about them in this column over the next few weeks.

The tough economic times facing our nation and our state will be the focus of the legislative debate this year. The Senate Appropriations Committee, which crafts the Senate's version of the state budget, will hold public hearings December 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> at the Capitol. If you are interested in how the state spends your tax dollars, this is your chance to influence the process. Just call the Appropriations Staff toll free at 866-475-6083 or e-mail them at [public.testimony@senate.mo.gov](mailto:public.testimony@senate.mo.gov). For a listing of the time, location, and the department heads who will testify at the Appropriations Committee hearings, visit <http://www.senate.mo.gov/08info/hrings.htm>. Although lawmakers begin crafting the budget before the legislative session begins, the real work starts after the governor outlines his budget priorities in his annual State of the State Address, which he delivers in late January.

In order to make the process run a bit more smoothly, please try to contact the Appropriations Staff by December 3 if you are interested in testifying. You will need to provide the name of the person who plans to testify, their organization, if any, and the subject matter. It helps to come prepared because testimony will be limited to three minutes. The Appropriations Staff will ask for a written copy of your testimony to include in the public record. It also helps to check in prior to the hearing to let them know you intend to speak to the committee.

The budget hearings are scheduled to be held in Senate Committee Room 2 on the first floor of the Capitol building, although that is subject to change, so check the website I mentioned earlier before making the trip to Jefferson City.

The state Conservation Department says Macon County leads the state in the number of deer taken during the annual firearms season. As of November 24<sup>th</sup>, hunters had taken 4,661 deer in Macon County. Adair County tops the deer harvest in the 18<sup>th</sup> Senate District with 3,428 deer taken.

I also want to remind folks that they have until December 16 to comment on hunting and fishing permit changes recently approved by the Conservation Commission. These proposed changes will become effective July 1, 2009, so it's important to make your voice heard if you have concerns about these changes by visiting <http://mdc.mo.gov/regs/permitcomment.htm>. This website also has a list of 30 questions that may answer some of your questions about these proposed changes.

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.