



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

Wes Shoemyer
18th Senate District

CAPITOL BUILDING, ROOM 434
JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65101

**A Weekly Column for the
Week of Dec. 22, 2008**

**Capitol Office
(573) 751-7852**

A Time of Reflection

JEFFERSON CITY – The end of the year offers us the opportunity to reflect on the events of the past 12 months and how they have affected our lives. At the same time, we look forward to a new year full of hopes and ambitions. The Christmas holidays remind us of the qualities that are so important to all of us – those of faith, humility and goodwill to our neighbors.

Looking back, Missouri lawmakers passed legislation in 2008 to reform the property tax system, we told utility companies they could not turn off power to people's homes during the heat of the summer, we capped the amount of tuition our public colleges and universities could charge to combat veterans, and we gave advanced practice nurses the authority to prescribe some medications. Those are just a few of the 100-plus bills that lawmakers sent to the governor this year.

Northeast Missouri saw several rounds of flooding in 2008, and it still warms my heart to think about how people came together to help each other during those times of need. The recovery continues, but things are slowly returning to normal. I guess it's nice to know, especially at this time of the year, that folks are willing to help others when times are tough.

This certainly was a year of change. The people voted for a new direction for our state and our nation. President-Elect Barak Obama and Governor-Elect Jay Nixon both bring a sense of optimism and a belief that government can and should work to improve the lives of the people.

We also witnessed democracy at the grassroots level in Missouri this year. I want to congratulate all of the folks who contacted the state Conservation Department to protest the proposed rule change on hunting fees. The new rule would have changed the landowner

acreage requirement for no-cost deer and turkey permits to 80 or more contiguous acres, but the department scrapped the idea after receiving a ton of criticism. Government works best when the citizens are interested and involved, and I'm proud thousands of Missouri citizens took the time to make their voices heard.

I also want to congratulate the Pike County Commission, which was awarded a \$58,179 state grant to perform masonry repairs on the Pike County Courthouse in Bowling Green. I know the commissioners have been working on this for some time, which just shows persistence pays off.

Looking ahead, Senators have pre-filed 141 bills and four joint resolutions for the 2009 session that begins January 7. However, I think everyone knows that our focus during the upcoming legislation session will be on the state budget. Somehow, we are going to have to find more than \$340-million in savings in order to achieve a balanced budget. Governor-Elect Nixon has already ordered a review of all state agencies and programs and is asking department directors to find ways to cut costs. It's going to be a difficult year no matter how you look at it, and I hope the spirit of cooperation that prevailed during last year's legislative session will continue in the New Year. The people of Missouri deserve nothing less.

I'm asking people to contact my office if they are interested in attending Governor-Elect Nixon's inauguration on the south steps of the state Capitol on Monday, Jan. 12. In the event of bad weather, the inauguration will be moved to the Capitol rotunda. Events will be free and open to the public, beginning with the parade at 10 a.m. The swearing-in ceremony on the steps of the Capitol will be held at 11:15, followed by a public reception at the Governor's Mansion. A potluck dinner will be held at the Capitol Plaza Hotel Monday afternoon, and the Grand March and Inaugural Ball will be held in the Capitol rotunda beginning at 7 p.m.

I want to wish a Happy New Year to everyone in the 18th Senate District. Topping my list of resolutions is the promise to serve you to the best of my ability as I return to Jefferson City for a new legislative session. I hope that 2009 brings you and your loved ones all of the blessings that you hope for.

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.