



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. 29, 2008**

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

The Start of Session

JEFFERSON CITY – Missouri lawmakers return to the state Capitol in Jefferson City this week to kick off the First Regular Session of the 95th Missouri General Assembly. Our first official day is January 7, when new members will be welcomed by their colleagues and will take the oath of office. It will be good to see the Capitol humming with activity once again, and I'm looking forward to working with our new legislators and our new governor.

As I have mentioned in previous columns, our main focus this year will be trying to fill the projected \$340-million hole in the state budget, caused by a big drop in state tax revenues after the economy began to tank last fall. Governor-Elect Jay Nixon and his staff have been reviewing the state budget in an effort to find ways to save money and make state government more efficient, and I look forward to hearing his plan when he delivers his inaugural address January 12. If you're interested in attending the inaugural events, please contact my office.

If you visit my senate website (<http://www.senate.mo.gov/09info/members/mem18.htm>) you'll notice a few changes from last year. The site has been redesigned and includes a new feature that I want to tell you about. Under the heading "Constituent Services" you'll see a link called Community Services Directory. Here you will find important information about your local elected officials, the state services available for your county, as well as nutrition, housing and transportation services available to seniors. This information is provided for each of the 13 counties in the 18th Senate District. I hope this directory will be a quick and easy way to find agencies, programs and services in your area. If you don't find the information you need in the directory or if you have any questions, please contact my office. If you plan to visit the Capitol, give us a call so we can arrange a tour of this beautiful building.

For seniors, now is the time to review your health care coverage. Each year the health care plans change what they cost and what they cover. If you are currently enrolled in Medicare, review the changes being made to your plan and compare it to others to make sure it still meets your needs. If you didn't sign up for Medicare Part B when you first became eligible, you may be able to sign up during the General Enrollment Period, which runs from January 1 through March 31 of each year.

This is also a good time to remind people that Medicare Advantage plans are not Medigap supplement plans. If you plan to sign up with a Medicare Advantage plan, make sure your local doctor has contracted with the Medicare Advantage plan to provide medical services.

Finally, I want to congratulate the town of Bethel for being awarded a Community Development Block Grant in the amount of \$97,958 for wastewater system improvements.

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.