



THE STOUFFER REPORT

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Senate District 21

Capitol Building, Room 332
Jefferson City, MO 65101

A Weekly Column for the Week of:
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MoDOT and Glasgow

I have a confession to make – I am not much of a politician. If remembering people’s names was a playground sport, I would be the last kid to be picked to be on a team. I do not always say what people want to hear and I fail to do a good job of pretending to be something that I am not.

On the flipside of that, I do not think I was elected to be a “politician,” either. I was elected to “be one of us,” someone who knows what it is like to live in rural Missouri, to earn a living, pay taxes, raise a family – and all of that other “American pie stuff.”

There are some “political” issues that I believe are worth fighting for and some that are just for fighting. I have also learned that there are two ways to get what you want as a legislator – and as my wife Sue Ellen calls it – it is easier to lead with sugar than vinegar.

In 2005, I was named chairman of the Senate’s Transportation Committee and although I do not believe that department is perfect, I am proud of the transformation it is making to become more efficient and effective.

Missouri’s Department of Transportation has gone from maintaining some of the worst roads in the nation to one of the best and largest systems in the U.S. Yes, I am certain that you know of a road in your county that still needs work. There are several in my senate district that quickly come to mind. But overall, the department is doing much better work than it was just a few years ago. We are replacing bridges all over the state, smoothing roads, expanding highways. MoDOT also ranks third in the nation for lowest administrative costs per mile.

Since last summer, I have been working with MoDOT regarding replacing the aging bridge at Glasgow and what to do with traffic during its closure. I have spent a great deal of time talking with MoDOT officials about solutions to this challenge, averaging about one meeting per business day since January 1st of the year. This is my number one priority right now. This week, I have been lobbying the commission in charge of the department to find the funding to make this happen.

Obviously, the local folks that use this bridge on a daily basis are nervous and anxious over the situation and there is a fear of the unknown.

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I applaud MoDOT for their efforts to work with the people of Howard, Saline, and Chariton counties to find a solution to this problem. District 2 Engineer Dan Niec drove the entire alternative route (62 miles) early in this project and committed himself to finding a solution beyond driving around the problem.

I pray Director Pete Rahn, Head Engineer Kevin Keith, and the entire commission will see this need for what it is and fully fund a ferry to take care of this transportation need during this time of transition. If and when they do make that decision, I will let you know. Keeping this transportation route intact is the biggest issue in my district right now.

If you have questions about this or any other matter, you can reach me at (573) 751-1507 or bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

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Senator Stouffer serves the counties of Carroll, Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette, Macon, Ray, Saline, and a part of Clay.