



Senator
Bill Stouffer

DISTRICT 21

Senator Bill Stouffer – Cultivating Rural Missouri.

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The Stouffer Report: Saving on Gas and Lives

Remember when two dollar a gallon gasoline was a concern? That was only three years ago. Now, gas is at four dollars and still climbing.

We are at the height of the summer travel season. While you may have changed your vacation plans, most likely it will involve driving, no matter what your destination. MoDOT reminds you there are two simple steps to take to save some money and save lives: slow down and wear your seat belt.

Officials with the U.S. Department of Energy say aggressive driving - speeding, rapid acceleration and braking - can lower your gas mileage by 5 percent in town and 33 percent on the highway. You do not have to go too far over the speed limit to see a difference in your gas mileage. The Department of Energy also says for every five miles above 60 miles per hour you speed, it is costing you another 20 cents per gallon.

MoDOT Director Pete Rahn called the Fourth of July the pinnacle of the summer travel season and the height of the summer construction season. He also says the 100 days from Memorial Day to Labor Day are the deadliest days of the year, in terms of traffic crashes. This is why I am joining Mr. Rahn in asking you to buckle up, slow down, and arrive alive.

June, July, and August also mark the busiest time of the year for highway travel. Traffic between Memorial Day and Labor Day grows by roughly three percent. Added vehicles on the roads translates into added distractions for drivers and more situations where crashes can occur, yet another reason to slow down and buckle up.

There are also a lot of farmers using the roads, too. I realize getting

behind a tractor or a county road grater can be frustrating sometimes, but it is one of the realities of living in rural Missouri. While most of our roads are wide enough for a wide piece of equipment to pull over, there are still quite a few narrow roads with no shoulders. When you encounter one of these vehicles, please be patient. Sure, it may add a few minutes to your trip, but that time is a lot better than trying to pass somebody on a blind hill or curve and risking your life.

Here are some tips from MoDOT:

- Slow Down! - Follow speed limits to save fuel and lives.
- Buckle Up! - Every trip, every time - safety belts save lives.
- Stay Alert! - Dedicate your full attention to the roadway.
- Follow Signs! - They'll guide you through work zones safely.
- Expect the Unexpected! - Watch for flaggers, workers and equipment.
- Pay Attention! - Turn the radio down and don't use your cellular phone.
- Be Patient! - Remember workers are improving the road for future travels.
- Don't Drink and Drive! - Impairment of any kind is unacceptable.
- Be Nice! - Merge as directed, don't tailgate and don't change lanes in a work zone.

Gas prices will not come down anytime soon with increases in global demand and no new laws encouraging increased domestic supply like more drilling and refining the in the U.S. Maybe those in Washington will see the light soon. However, we can stay ahead of the game by slowing down, using some common sense, and being a considerate driver.

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

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by e-mail at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

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