



Senator
Bill Stouffer

DISTRICT 21

Senator Bill Stouffer – Cultivating Rural Missouri.

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The Stouffer Report: Missouri's Economy Stays Strong

The economy is probably the biggest topic of discussion these days. But things are not as bad as you may be hearing.

Missouri has made great strides over the past three years to fend off the kind of financial picture the country is looking at. Of course, there is no perfect solution. The economy tends to head toward a slowdown or recession roughly every 10 years, usually near the end of a decade. But, I also understand high gas and oil prices — which have led to higher food prices — have helped to play a negative role in the nation's economy. With that said, I would like to point to some of the things Missouri has done to stay ahead of the game.

Missouri began the year with a \$600 million surplus. Just five years ago, the state was facing a \$1 billion shortfall.

In 2002, the number of state government employees was 62,832. It is currently at 59,820, marking the first time in memory state bureaucracy is shrinking.

According to the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#), Missouri is one of only 13 states with a stable or optimistic budget outlook.

Since 2005, I have helped to pass bills that reform Worker's Compensation laws and cut down on frivolous lawsuits in Missouri. These may not sound like things that would impact you and your family directly, but they do trickle down to the cost of just about everything. The reforms ensure the negative economic impact is lessened.

The Show-Me State has added around 70,000 jobs over the last three years. Before then, we were known as the number one job loss state in the country. That is a fast turnaround, no matter how you look at it. We

have been fortunate in moving Missouri forward in terms of making the state appealing to so many countries around the world and they are bringing their industries and companies here. Ball State University's [2008 National Manufacturing and Logistics Report Card](#) ranks Missouri as tops in the nation for attracting new manufacturing jobs.

In July of this year, 978 people in my district got job training through the [Missouri Customized Training Program](#), which was created in 2004. This is a program that allows people who already work for a company to train for new technologies and further their education to prepare for the future.

As chairman of the [Senate Transportation Committee](#), I know how important getting from place to place is. Bad roads equals delays and added repairs and maintenance to your vehicle. MoDOT is working toward its next project, [800 Better Bridges by 2012](#). They have been making changes to ensure your tax dollars are spent in the most efficient way possible and I applaud their efforts.

Where the economy will go in the 4th quarter is anybody's guess. What role Congress will play with a so-called bailout plan is also yet to be answered. One thing is for sure, I pray we continue to do everything we can to keep Missouri a great place to live, work, and raise a family for years to come.

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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