



MISSOURI SENATE

Rob Mayer
25th Senate District

JEFFERSON CITY

CAPITOL BUILDING, ROOM 331
JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65101

**A Column for the Week
of March 17, 2008**

**Contact: Irene Murray
(573) 751-3859**

Relief Efforts Shine Amid Flooding Crisis

JEFFERSON CITY — For the residents of southeastern Missouri, this week is yet another that we will vividly remember as we experienced yet another in a long series of weather-related emergencies. This time: tremendous downpours and flooding that brought up to a foot of rain across portions of southeastern Missouri and delivered the worst flooding in decades.

The community of Piedmont in Wayne County was one of the most heavily affected areas, and as I write this, is still virtually surrounded by water. All of the counties in my senate district — Butler, Dunklin, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Ripley, Stoddard and Wayne – are among the 70 counties declared disaster areas by President Bush. In my own home county of Stoddard, we have also experienced widespread flooding.

The flooding conditions have caused great hardships for us and for hundreds of thousands of other Missourians in our neighboring counties, many of whom have been evacuated from their homes, are living in temporary shelters and are separated from their families. Touch-and-go water rescues have been common in recent days, as flash flooding concerns turned to major flooding worries from the many bodies of water that crisscross our area of the state. Hundreds of road closings are making it difficult to navigate relief efforts, but through the cooperation of countless people, we are making tremendous strides in accessing damage and delivering aid to those in need.

I had the opportunity to visit the Black River Coliseum in Poplar Bluff on Thursday with Lt. Gov. Peter Kinder and talk with residents displaced by floodwaters. Lt. Gov. Kinder and I also met with Poplar Bluff and Butler County officials and took a firsthand look at the levee breaches along the Black River.

The scenes we surveyed were staggering and really brought home the powerful and devastating effects of this phenomenal storm.

As I visited with residents, city and county officials, law enforcement personnel, people from local, state and federal agencies and with a large group of volunteers all providing relief to our communities, I was struck by their astute attention, commitment, and compassion in helping others during this life-threatening situation. I know I join countless others who want to thank them for their dedication and sacrifice to bringing much-needed relief during this difficult time.

I am confident that our communities are strong and that we will successfully work together as we now turn our focus to cleanup and recovery from this huge flooding catastrophe.

Note: Missourians in need of assistance or who would like to volunteer in the flood response effort should call 211 or 800-427-4626.

– END –

Senator Rob Mayer represents the people of Wayne, Ripley, Butler, Stoddard, New Madrid, Pemiscot and Dunklin counties in the Missouri Senate.