



Senator Matt Bartle – Serving Jackson County

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Staying Safe During Deer Season

The myriad of colors on the trees in our beautiful state signals that we are well into fall, which for many, means the start of deer hunting season. Even for non-deer hunters, it is important to be aware that this is the time of year when deer are more likely to be on the roadways, so drivers need to be on the lookout, especially around dawn and dusk.

For many Missourians, the opportunity to go deer hunting is something to look forward to all year. Hunters took 238,819 deer during the 2008 firearms season and it looks like they have the potential to meet or exceed that number this year. This year's deer hunting seasons are as follows:

- Archery season: Sept. 15–Nov. 13 and Nov. 25–Jan. 15, 2010.
- Main firearms season: Nov. 14–24.
- Youth season: Oct. 31 and Nov. 1 and Jan. 2–3, 2010.
- Antlerless season: Nov. 25–Dec. 6.
- Muzzleloader season: Dec. 19–29.

Exercising safe hunting practices is one of the most important things for a hunter to do. Hunters are required to wear a hunter orange hat or cap and shirt, coat or vest. Also, hunters born on or after January 1, 1967, must have taken an approved hunter education program. For other safety guidelines recommended by the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), visit www.mdc.mo.gov/hunt/deer/safety.htm.

When the hunt is over, there is a way for Missouri hunters to give back to their communities and help those who suffer from hunger. A program called Share the Harvest provides an easy way for hunters to donate venison to those who do not have a steady source of protein in their diets. For more information on Share the Harvest or to get involved in the program, or for a list of participating processors in your area, go to

www.mdc.mo.gov/hunt/deer/share/ or call (573) 751-4115.

Finally, this is the time of year when deer-vehicle collisions on Missouri highways are more common as bucks become more active and weather turns colder. More than 3,000 collisions with deer occurred last year on Missouri's highways, and although some accidents with deer are unavoidable, drivers can take extra precautions to reduce the chances of an accident.

Be prepared for deer to cross or dart into a road at any time, particularly around dusk and dawn. Remember to stay alert, slow down and buckle up. Most people injured in deer-vehicle collisions weren't wearing a seat belt. For drivers and hunters alike, just being more aware of your surroundings will help ensure a safe and successful deer season.

If you have any comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by e-mail at matt_bartle@senate.mo.gov or by phone at (888) 711-9278. My web address is <http://www.senate.mo.gov/bartle>.

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