



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the
Week of March 2, 2009**

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Cemetery Maintenance

JEFFERSON CITY – Whenever you drive through rural Missouri, the chances are pretty good that you will pass by an old cemetery. Many are family plots like the Deaver or Swindell cemeteries in Monroe County, while others are the last remnants of a community that no longer exists. Some of these rural cemeteries are in fairly good condition, maintained by relatives or local preservationists, but many of these old cemeteries are not much more than a tangle of weeds and brush. For the last couple of years I have introduced legislation to protect our historical legacy and to preserve the dignity of our ancestors' final resting places.

This week the Senate gave final approval to my cemetery maintenance bill and sent it to the House for debate. Senate Bill 168, which was combined with a few other similar bills, allows the government of any city, town, village or county to submit a property tax levy to the voters to pay for the upkeep of these old cemeteries. The tax cannot not exceed one fourth of one cent per one hundred dollars assessed valuation and the tax cannot be imposed without the approval of local voters.

The idea for this bill came from Jim Perkins, a retired member of the U.S. Air Force living in Unionville, in Putnam County. Jim is with the Missouri Military Honor Team which performs military services for deceased veterans. He says a number of the cemeteries where those services are held are in poor condition. These old cemeteries are an important part of our heritage and need to be preserved and protected.

The Senate this week also approved a resolution I am sponsoring that calls on Congress to support the continuation of horse processing in the United States. The measure offers

incentives to help create horse processing plants throughout the country and opposes any legislation introduced in Congress that would restrict horse processing.

This week Stacy Steen of Jefferson City joined our Capitol office. Stacy previously worked in the House and most recently was with Transit Casualty Company. She has a lot of expertise in insurance and health care issues and will be a valuable member of my staff.

We welcomed a lot of visitors to our Capitol office this week, including the Clark County Gifted Class led by Renita Hunziker and the Clark County commissioners. Gary Leu of Shelbina, a member of the American Trucking Association and Captain of America's Road Team, was presented with a resolution acknowledging 4.3-million miles without an accident. Gary is a regional driver for Walmart. Paula Gough, her husband Scott and their daughter Emma stopped by to talk about the Buckle Up campaign, and I got a chance to visit with Brenda Niemeyer, whose appointment I sponsored to the Missouri Planning Council for Development Disabilities.

If you have any questions or comments about this or any other issue, give my Capitol office a call at (573) 751-7852, send me an email at wes.shoemyer@senate.mo.gov, or drop a line to Room 434, State Capitol, 201 West Capitol Ave., Jefferson City, MO 65101.