



## MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the  
Week of April 20, 2009**

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# Local Government

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JEFFERSON CITY – I have always believed that government is best when it is closest to the people it serves. I enjoy serving the people of the 18<sup>th</sup> Senatorial District in the Missouri General Assembly, but a lot of the issues we discuss do not have much impact on the people back home. When we do pass legislation that affects the folks back home, it is often local government officials who implement those policies.

If the legislature changes the way property taxes are collected, it is your local assessor who has to deal with (sometimes) angry property owners. If lawmakers make changes to our public education system, it is your local school board that has to make sense of those changes and apply them to local schools. There are times, I think, when we don't give enough thought to how legislation we are debating will affect the folks back home who serve on our city councils, our county commissions, our public health boards and other local government entities. That's why I was proud to host a number of local government officials from northeast Missouri this week. It was an opportunity for them to bring their concerns directly to me while giving them an opportunity to watch the legislative process. I travel throughout the district meeting with local government officials when the legislature is not in session, but it's difficult for me to meet with all of these hard-working folks when we are in session. I really enjoyed getting the chance to spend some time with these officials, and I hope they came away from the experience with a better understanding of how the General Assembly operates.

We're down to the final three weeks of the legislative session, and we still have a lot of heavy lifting to do. We still need to pass the big economic development bill passed by the House back in February, and we have until May 8<sup>th</sup> to wrap up work on the \$23.2-billion state

budget. The Senate version is quite a bit different from the state budget approved by the House, so members of the House Budget Committee and the Senate Appropriations Committee will spend the next two weeks trying to work out a compromise.

This week the House took up my bill (SB 196), which changes the procedure for detaching territory from a public water supply district. The House is also considering my bill (SB 480) to create the Missouri Board on Geographic Names and modify the name and duties of the Second Capitol Commission. The Senate gave final approval to a House bill (HB747) I handled in the Senate, which specifies that in order for a person to be guilty of the crime of sexual contact with a prisoner or offender, the prisoner or offender must be confined in a jail, prison, or correctional facility.

In addition to all of the folks who visited our Capitol office for the 18<sup>th</sup> Senatorial Day, we also welcomed a lot of the county assessors and collectors who were in town for their annual convention as well as Dennis Miller and a group of home-schooled children from Kirksville.

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](mailto:wes.shoemyer@senate.mo.gov), or drop a line to Room 434, State Capitol, 201 West Capitol Ave., Jefferson City, MO 65101.