



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

Wes Shoemyer
18th Senate District

CAPITOL BUILDING, ROOM 434
JEFFERSON CITY, MO 65101

**A Weekly Column for the
Week of August 17, 2009**

**Capitol Office
(573) 751-7852**

A Grand Farewell & A Grand Fair

JEFFERSON CITY – This week our state said farewell to one of the most successful governors we have had in Missouri – Warren E. Hearnes, who died August 16 at the age of 86. Governor Hearnes was a strong supporter of public education and mental health and worked tirelessly to increase support for both during his two terms as our chief executive. The fact that Hearnes was able to serve two terms was thanks to his popularity in the General Assembly and among the people of Missouri. Hearnes convinced the legislature and then the people to approve a constitutional amendment allowing a governor to hold a second four-year term. Prior to that, a governor basically became a lame duck as soon as he took office. Hearnes won re-election with 60% of the popular vote, numbers not often seen today.

Hearnes was successful because he was willing to work with anyone who supported his vision for moving Missouri forward, regardless of political affiliation. He famously took on the Senate President Pro Tem, a fellow Democrat, in the early 70's over funding increases for improvements in public education and mental health. By the time the dust had settled, the increases had been approved and the Pro Tem had lost his leadership position.

Warren Hearnes was married to Betty Sue Cooper Hearnes for 61 years, who was on hand for the state ceremony this week with their three daughters and their families. Like Warren, Betty also served 10 years in the Missouri House. She also ran for governor in 1988 but was unsuccessful, though she has spent years encouraging women to run for political office.

Warren E. Hearnes was one of Missouri's greatest political assets, and I wish we had more like him today.

Speaking of politics, I had a great time visiting with folks at the Governor's Ham Breakfast at the Missouri State Fair this week. The ham breakfast has always been a big draw for elected officials, from county commissioners to candidates for Congress. It gives us a chance to talk to people in a relaxed setting over some great food.

I hope everyone had a chance to visit the Missouri State Fair, which was named the "Best Family Destination" in the 2009 Best of *Rural Missouri* Readers' Choice Contest. With nearly 400 acres of fun, the state fair offers something for everyone. I especially enjoyed the Rural Lifestyles Showcase at this year's fair, where folks could learn about farmers' markets, livestock, hunting, fishing and family living. In these tough times it seems a lot of people want to get back to the basics, and rural living has a lot to offer for those tired of the hustle and bustle of life in the city.

I also want to mention several projects in the 18th Senate District that have just been awarded Community Development Block Grants for infrastructure improvements. Monroe County has been awarded \$123,110 in CDBG money for retrofitting the courthouse to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act; Paris will receive \$43,900 to remove 10 dilapidated houses in town; Audrain County has been awarded \$215,190 to meet ADA requirements at the courthouse; Scotland County will receive \$163,400 for needed bridge improvements; Adair County will get \$191,100 to replace bridges; Kirksville will receive \$100,000 to fund the position of downtown manager; and Bowling Green has been awarded \$63,400 to remove 16 dilapidated houses.

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.