



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the
Week of November 30, 2009**

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Looking Ahead to the 2010 Session

JEFFERSON CITY – I'm going to have to start exercising a bit more to work off all of that wonderful Thanksgiving food that I shared with my family over the holiday. I hope everyone had a chance to get together with family and friends over the long weekend to count their blessings and rekindle that family spirit that glows so brightly during this season.

Missouri lawmakers got a glimpse of the upcoming legislative session this week when members of the House and Senate pre-filed bills for the 2010 session. Traditionally, each member of the senate, beginning with the most senior member, picks his or her top three priority bills and each is assigned a number. Bills with lower numbers typically stand a better chance of making it to the Senate floor for debate, although nothing is guaranteed. Members of the Missouri Senate have pre-filed more than 100 bills and resolutions so far.

I'd like to mention one of the bills I pre-filed this year. Senate Bill 666 (I have nothing to do with the actual numbering of bills) requires all offices occupied by elected officials in the state capitol building to be accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities by December 31, 2015. It's similar to legislation I have filed every year I have served in the Senate. I think it's important that all of our citizens have access to the people they elect to represent them, regardless of disability. We've made a lot of progress in making our streets and public places accessible to people with disabilities, but it is frustrating that our seat of state government is not open to all of its citizens.

I want to thank the Missouri Department of Transportation for improving an important section of Highway 15 between Paris and Mexico. By repaving the roadway and adding shoulders and rumble strips, MODOT workers have increased the safety for our children and families on this north-south corridor through northeast Missouri. The improvements also have

allowed the speed limit on this section of highway to be increased to 60 mph. I think this is a wise use of federal stimulus dollars because it provided jobs to Missourians during an economic downturn while improving our highway infrastructure.

I was honored to be invited to be the guest speaker at the deputy sheriff's graduation ceremony in Kirksville this week. These brave men and women dedicate their lives to protecting ours and I believe we all owe them our support and our gratitude.

I also was asked to give some opening remarks to the Missouri Livestock Symposium in Kirksville this week. The Symposium features an agriculture and consumer oriented trade show, educational speakers from 12 states speaking on all species of horses, beef cattle, sheep and meat goats, forages, stock dogs, renewable resources, and more. This important gathering has been held for the past ten years and may give us some good ideas as we approach a legislative session where agriculture issues will be front and center. As I mentioned before, I have received assurances from Senate leaders that bills dealing with agricultural issues will be a top priority during the 2010 session.

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.