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October 16, 2009

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The Stouffer Report: *Deer Season Safety*

Fall is here and deer season is coming. We will need to be on the lookout for deer on the road for the next several weeks, especially around dawn and dusk.

One of the thrills of living in rural Missouri is the chance to get up on a cool fall morning and be in the woods at sunrise to try your luck at bringing home a six- or eight-point buck. The [Missouri Department of Conservation](#) (MDC) says deer have been on the increase through most of Missouri, so getting your limit should not be too difficult this year.

Safety is one of the most important things to keep in mind before beginning the hunt. Hunters need to ensure they are wearing a hat or cap and shirt, coat or vest that is hunter orange. Camouflage orange is not a substitute. Also remember, folks born on or after January 1, 1967, must have taken an approved hunter education program.

The archery season runs from September 15 to November 13 of this year, and again from November 25, 2009, to January 15, 2010. The main firearms season will be November 14-24; early youth season will run October 31 and November 1; antlerless will be November 25 to December 6, in selected areas only; muzzleloader will be December 19 to 29; and

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the late youth season will be January 2 and 3, 2010. As always, each person is allowed one deer and can be in the woods from 30 minutes before sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset.

Even if folks do not hunt, deer can make an impact in your life — literally. The [Missouri Insurance Information Service](#) (MIIS) says the highest number of auto accidents that involve deer occur during the last three months of the year. The MDC says 7,454 car-deer crashes happened in 2007, the most recent year for these statistics. They go onto say the worst car-deer crashes happen when a driver tries to avoid the animal.

The folks at MIIS advise us to be most alert for deer on the road in the mornings and evenings. The old adage about deer is true when they are travelling: if we see one, chances are we will see at least one more behind it. Most importantly, if we see a deer and it is too late, we should go ahead and hit it. Most rural folks know it is actually better to hit the deer than it is to hit an oncoming vehicle, run off the road or hit a tree.

Enjoy the benefits of rural Missouri this fall. Have a good time with the younger kids who may be experiencing their first hunt. But, above all else, practice common sense and follow the rules. That way, we all come out ahead.

Senator Stouffer serves the counties of Carroll, Chariton, Cooper, Howard, Lafayette, Macon, Ray, Saline, and a part of Clay.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please call toll free (866) 768-3987 or by e-mail at bstouffer@senate.mo.gov.

