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**A Weekly Column for the
Week of Jan. 12, 2009**

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Experts Testify In Special Senate Seminars and Senators Honor Unsung Heroes

Over the past few years, it's easy to see the effects term limits have had on the General Assembly. Gone are the days of the "old lions" that retained their seats for decades — exhibiting the years of knowledge upon the chamber they served in. Now, it's possible that half of the Senate chamber could be filled with new faces after a cycle of elections. With that vast knowledge of the inner working of the Legislature leaving these great halls, new members with fresh ideas have filled their seats.

As a senior member of the Legislature, it is important to continue to inform the new lawmakers, as well as returning members, about issues important to Missourians across the state. To do so, experts have been scheduled to testify in a series of seminars designed to educate lawmakers in the upper chamber about key issues the Legislature will be facing this year.

The first seminar was held to discuss Missouri's current and future energy policy, with emphasis on alternative and renewable energy efforts. This seminar included testimony from representatives from various Missouri utility companies. Lawmakers also took part in a seminar focusing on life sciences, with discussion about how Missouri can remain viable in the life sciences industry.

Insurance affordability was one of the key issues addressed in the Senate President Pro Tem's opening day speech to the upper chamber. Lawmakers listened in on discussions in a Senate seminar about the cost of the uninsured in our state and how to make insurance more affordable to the citizens of Missouri.

My colleagues and I are also set to attend seminars discussing transportation infrastructure and development in Missouri; our state's agriculture industry; education in Missouri, including early childhood, elementary and secondary education; economic development and how our state competes with other states; and higher education, including what other states have done to strengthen their coordinating boards.

The Senate also had a chance to honor several Missouri citizens on the Senate floor. Recently the Missouri Senate released its 2009 calendar honoring Missouri's Unsung Heroes. Several members of the Senate, including myself, honored those unsung heroes with resolutions. One of those unsung heroes was Hoyt and Margaret Owsley of Preston. The Owsleys have dedicated 60 years to serving and bettering their community. In fact, the Owsleys were the driving force in getting the town of Preston incorporated. Hoyt is now retired from the city board, but is still incredibly active in his community. Margaret volunteers in the office at the Prairie Chapel United Methodist Church, which is also home to the Dallas County food pantry, where both donate much of their time.

Jack Shelledy lives in Sedalia and turned his life around by dedicating himself to improving his community. By getting involved in his community, he was able to take his life and turn it around full circle, while at the same time, helping those who were in his similar situation and getting them on the right path. Many community members have counted on Jack, who has vowed to help make life better for others.

I am proud to represent these dedicated and selfless individuals in the Missouri Senate. I know there are many others in our state just like them that make the state we call home a better place to live.

If you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please feel free to contact me at 573-751-8793 or by e-mail at: delbertscott@senate.mo.gov.

Senator Delbert Scott represents the people of Barton, Benton, Cedar, Dallas, Henry, Hickory, Pettis, Polk and St. Clair counties in the Missouri Senate.

