



MISSOURI SENATE
JEFFERSON CITY

Delbert Scott
28th Senate District

Capitol Building, Room 416
Jefferson City, MO 65101

A Column for the Week of:
July 20, 2009

Contact: Debbie Poire
(573) 751-8793

National Cell Phone Courtesy Month

July Marks Month of Reflection on Cell Phone Use

Today, more than 250 million Americans are subscribers to some sort of cell phone plan ([CTIA Wireless Association](#) - 2007). That's approximately 82 percent of our country's population. The use of cell phones has wildly grown in just 20 years. In 1987, a little more than a million Americans had cell phones. Ten years later, the number jumped to 55 million. With the number of cell phone users climbing each day, citizens have become aware of the advantages and dangers of these mobile devices.

There are several programs out there geared at getting the most out of your mobile phone. For example, wireless AMBER alerts provide a free public service that allows wireless subscribers the ability to help law enforcement in their search for abducted children by opting to receive AMBER alerts as text messages.

However, the benefits of owning a cell phone can sometimes be over-shadowed by the frustrating behavior of many cell phone users. July was designated as National Cell Phone Courtesy Month to encourage us to pay attention to the world around us while we are using our cell phones. We've all seen rude and even downright disrespectful behavior from someone using their cell phone inappropriately. There have been countless times when a cell phone conversation has interrupted my important conversations and meetings — even leisurely trips to the movies.

We've also seen this offensive behavior on Missouri's roadways when citizens choose to talk on their cell phones while driving. This lack of attention and focus can and has led to devastating accidents — not only in our state but all over the country. In Florida, a driver crashed his 18-wheeler into a school bus while he was text messaging (September 2008). The

crash injured 11 children and killed a 13-year-old girl.

This past session, my colleagues and I in the Missouri Senate added a provision to an overarching crime bill ([House Bill 62](#)) that bans individuals 21 or younger from sending, reading, or writing text messages on Missouri roads except in certain circumstances. When it comes to using your cell phone behind the wheel, it's important to remember that safety always comes first and should be your number one priority.

If you have any questions about laws regarding cell phone use or any other legislative matter, 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.

