

For Immediate Release

SHARING A VIEW OF THE STATE

Issues and Comments – 33rd Senatorial District

Senator

Chuck Purgason

As I prepare this column, it is the morning of September 11, a date we will never forget. There is nothing I can add to what has already been written or said about the events of the morning eight years ago. My thoughts and prayers are with the victims of the attacks. At the same time, my thanks and gratitude are with the men and women who are diligently serving every day in harms way to keep us safe.

Dovetailing with last week's column, the ill health of a county commissioner from Southwest Missouri has led to another vacancy in the Legislature. Presiding Commissioner George Cutbirth, from Stone County resigned his position in July. As I mentioned last week, Governor Jay Nixon has sole authority to appoint a successor. In the case of a vacancy at the county level, the County Central Committees of each political party usually select a candidate and submit the name to the governor. Almost always, the governor will appoint the candidate from his own party. I commend Governor Nixon with his appointment, Republican State Representative Dennis Wood, to fill the remainder of the term.

Wood, from Kimberling City, was term limited and would have been precluded from running for the House again. His current term will expire December 2010. He resigned his House seat on Thursday and was sworn in as a commissioner on the same day. Governor Nixon has called a Special Election for February 3, 2010 to fill the vacancy. This will ensure the people of the district will have representation for most of the next legislative session.

The third annual Tour of Missouri bicycle race began this week in St. Louis. The event came through our area with a stage finish in Jefferson City Thursday afternoon. This year's race has not been without controversy. In light of budget constraints, Governor Nixon contemplated withdrawing the state's sponsorship. Without the money from the state, the race would most likely have been cancelled. A vigorous debate ensued as to whether Missouri realizes a return on its investment. Large crowds are drawn to the race, but the question remains how many are from other states and how much do they spend when they are here. The race is considered one of the premier cycling competitions in the United States. The presence of seven elite teams in this year's lineup is testament to how far the Tour of Missouri has come in a short time. Ultimately, Nixon declined to withhold the money and the race continued as planned. It will conclude September 13 in Kansas City.

As always, I appreciate hearing your comments, opinions and concerns. I can be reached in Jefferson City at (573) 751-1882, e-mail to chuck.purgason@senate.mo.gov or regular mail at Missouri Senate, State Capitol, Room 420, Jefferson City, MO 65101

