



## MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the  
Week of August 2, 2010**

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### Random Thoughts

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JEFFERSON CITY – The first couple weeks of August typically represent the calm before the storm. School starts in a couple of weeks, our county fairs are winding down, and there's not a lot to do on the farm right now other than putting up hay and the usual daily chores. So I thought I'd turn to a few items in the news that caught my attention this week.

First of all, thank you to the 23 percent of Missouri voters who exercised their right to vote in the primary elections August 3. I know it's tough to motivate folks to go out on one of the hottest days of the summer and cast a ballot, but it's the most effective way to make your voice heard. Actually, voters in northeast Missouri spoke louder than most: 36 percent voted in Monroe County, 39 percent voted in Shelby County, 39.6 percent voted in Scotland County, 40.3 percent cast ballots in Schuyler County, and 42.3 percent of Putman County voters went to the polls this week. We take democracy seriously in northeast Missouri.

I hope you had an opportunity to save a little money on back-to-school supplies over the weekend. Missouri's annual sales tax holiday for back-to-school supplies helps parents save money on clothing, school supplies, computer software, personal computers and related devices like printers. Most of the counties in the 18<sup>th</sup> Senate District participated in the sales tax holiday. The average family will spend an estimated \$600 on back-to-school supplies this year. Did you know the back-to-school shopping season is the second biggest shopping event of the year after the winter holidays?

This week the United States Department of Agriculture announced a series of grants to provide high-speed Internet service to parts of rural Missouri. I've talked about the importance of getting high-speed Internet to our rural areas in previous columns because of the potential to create jobs, boost economic development, and improve health care and education. Eight Missouri companies will receive more than \$81 million in funding from the American

Recovery and Reinvestment Act. One of those eight companies, Windstream Corporation, already provides coverage to parts of northeast Missouri, and the \$10.3 million grant they are receiving will allow the company to expand its services to many more homes and businesses.

Finally, I received an e-mail this week from the Missouri Department of Transportation regarding this year's anti-drunk driving campaign. The "You Drink & Drive, You Lose" campaign will run from August 20 – September 6. Law enforcement agencies will participate in statewide sobriety checkpoints and DWI saturation patrols to get impaired drivers off of our roads. Missouri's new DWI law goes into effect August 28. It will increase jail time for repeat DWI offenders, move cases from municipal to state courts where penalties are often tougher, require better record-keeping for DWI cases so repeat offenders can be tracked, and offer offenders the chance to participate in a DWI Court that focuses on treatment instead of going to jail. Last year 280 people were killed in drunken driving accidents in Missouri and 1,140 people were seriously injured.

If you have any questions or comments about these or any other issue, give my Capitol office a call at (573) 751-7852, send me an e-mail at [wes.shoemyer@senate.mo.gov](mailto:wes.shoemyer@senate.mo.gov), or drop a line to Room 434, State Capitol, 201 W. Capitol Ave., Jefferson City, MO 65101.