



## MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the  
Week of August 23, 2010**

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# Back to School

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JEFFERSON CITY – The end of August is a busy, exciting and often exhausting time of the year if you are a parent, a teacher or a small business owner selling school supplies. Most kids across the state are wrapping up their first week of school, and college campuses across Missouri are overflowing with new and returning students. With summer quickly coming to an end, many of us will resume our typical fall schedules of getting the kids out the door for school before we head off to work. Our evenings will be filled with football games, parent-teacher conferences, and trying (sometimes in vain) to help the kids with their homework.

I always like to remind folks this time of the year to be careful when driving during school hours because kids don't always look where they are going, especially now that they all seem to have cell phones, iPods and other distractions. Please drive slowly through school zones and be alert for school buses picking up or dropping off students.

Meantime, 60 school districts across the state will be getting some help from the federal government to renovate outdated buildings or build new school buildings. Governor Nixon visited Mark Twain Elementary in Hannibal this week to announce the school district was receiving \$4.1 million in no-interest bonds to help build a new school across the street from the current school, which was built in 1903. The federal money will allow the district to save an estimated \$1 million in interest costs. Bids for construction will be sought this fall, and construction of the new school is expected to begin next spring.

During his visit to Hannibal, the governor called the money a "perfect example of how one-time expenditures can make a difference" and "help us meet the gap" by offering schools financial relief, a chance to create jobs and to provide facilities that will serve educational needs for decades.

I think the money is a good example of the federal stimulus at work. To those naysayers

who say ‘government can’t do anything right’ or ‘government can’t do anything good,’ this is money that is going to improve the community of Hannibal for years to come.

While the federal dollars are welcome, most of the support for the new school comes from the citizens who approved a \$13 million no-tax-increase bond issue for district construction projects in April. More than *80 percent* of those who cast ballots voted for it, which shows how much folks in northeast Missouri value the education of our children.

We also received word this week that two communities in the 18<sup>th</sup> Senatorial District have been awarded Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for infrastructure improvements. The community of Kirksville has been awarded \$300,000 in CDBG funding for drainage system improvements, and Knox County will receive \$82,550 in CDBG money to replace a bridge.

If you have any questions or comments about these or any other issues 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.