



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the
Week of September 6, 2010**

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Committee Hearings to Get Underway

JEFFERSON CITY – Missouri lawmakers will begin discussing important public policy issues when they return to the Capitol September 14 and 15 for the annual veto session. Seven Senate committee hearings are scheduled for those two days already, and there may be a few more added before the session begins. Committee chairs will schedule a number of public hearings in the weeks following the veto session as we draft legislation to be considered by the 96th Missouri General Assembly, which begins the first week of January.

Three of the committees I serve on will hold hearings during the veto session. The Joint Committee on Transportation Oversight will meet Wednesday, September 15 at 3 p.m. in House Hearing Room 1. Our panel will discuss the ongoing search for a new MoDOT director to succeed Pete Rahn, who announced his resignation earlier this year. We will also review an application for the Heroes Way Interchange Program, which honors the fallen Missouri heroes who have been killed in action while performing active military duty with the armed forces in Afghanistan or Iraq on or after September 11, 2001.

Earlier that afternoon, right after the veto session is adjourned, the Educated Citizenry 2020 Committee will meet in the Senate Lounge. This panel is one of three 2020 committees created by legislative leaders to develop a long-term strategic vision for our state. The Educated Citizenry 2020 Committee I serve on will help us determine ways to improve Missouri's public education system. Currently, Missouri ranks 30th in the number of 25-34 year olds with a degree past high school.

Finally, the Joint Committee on Legislative Research will meet at 3 p.m. Tuesday, September 14 in House Hearing Room 6 for its quarterly business meeting. This committee provides a research and reference service for legislative problems; it investigates legislative

and governmental institutions of this state or other states to help us perform our duties; it can assist and cooperate with any interim legislative committee or commission created by the General Assembly; and it helps draft bills, resolutions, memorials and amendments.

For a complete list of Senate hearings, visit the Senate website at www.senate.mo.gov. I encourage you to attend a committee hearing if lawmakers serving on the panel plan to discuss an issue important to you. By sitting in on a committee hearing, you can simply listen to the proceedings to get a better understanding of how your state government works, or you can speak directly to the senators and representatives who work for you during the public comment period.

In other news, the governor this week announced a five-year grant to help farmers control soil erosion and improve soil quality in the North Fork Watershed, which drains into Mark Twain Lake. The \$3.3 million grant from the USDA will provide financial and technical help to farmers in Adair, Knox, Macon and Shelby counties. The grant program announced by the governor this week is part of the Mississippi River Basin Initiative, a 12-state effort to limit agricultural runoff that makes its way into the Mississippi River, requiring extra treatment of drinking water.

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, or drop a line to Room 434, State Capitol, 201 W. Capitol Ave., Jefferson City, MO 65101.