



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the
Week of September 20, 2010**

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Missouri's "North Star"

JEFFERSON CITY – During the past couple of weeks I have had the good fortune to spend some time in Kirksville, Missouri's "North Star." Kirksville is the county seat of Adair County and the home of one of our country's top public universities, Truman State University, which consistently ranks among the top 10 "best values" in public higher education. I can vouch for the quality education students receive at Truman State because I've been lucky to have had several Truman students serve as interns at my Capitol office during my time in the Missouri Senate.

Last week I had the honor of attending the formal installation of Truman State's 16th President, Dr. Troy Paino. Dr. Paino was named as the new president of Truman State on May 10 after serving as the university's Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The theme Dr. Paino chose for his installation ceremonies was "Celebrating Community," which reflects Troy and Kelly Paino's love of and involvement in the community they now call home. The Painos attend First United Methodist Church in Kirksville, and Dr. Paino is a member of the Rotary Club of Kirksville. Troy and Kelly have two daughters, Sophia and Chloe. I have worked with Dr. Paino on educational issues over the past few years and know Truman State University is in very good hands under his leadership.

I returned to Kirksville this week to attend the governor's regional economic development meeting at the Student Union Building at Truman State. The meeting is one of six regional economic development gatherings held this week as part of the governor's Strategic Initiatives for Economic Growth. The purpose of the meetings is to talk to local experts about how we can make sure Missouri is in the best position to compete for the jobs

and investment of the 21st century. Governor Nixon spoke this week during the first meeting of the northeast Missouri planning team, which includes leaders from Truman State and A.T. Still University, Northeast Regional Medical Center, Moberly Area Community College, North Central Missouri College, economic development officials from Albany, Bethany, Brookfield, Cameron, Hannibal, Kirksville, Macon and Trenton, as well as private business owners, school superintendents and local elected officials. These meetings will lead to the development of six to eight strategic objectives to create jobs and grow Missouri's economy over the next five years. The governor has asked for a set of recommendations by the first week of December.

I also had the pleasure of touring the Northeast Regional Medical Center in Kirksville this week to see the newly renovated obstetrics department. Dr. Toni Smith showed us the new private rooms and baths, the nursery and the modern technology being used to care for new mothers in northeast Missouri. The medical center also recently expanded its critical care unit to reduce the number of patients who have to be transferred to other facilities. It's easy to see why the Northeast Regional Medical Center was named one the country's Top 100 hospitals in 2010.

Finally, I'd like to remind folks to take it easy on our rural roads and highways as we approach harvest season once again. Please be alert for slow-moving combines and tractors as you're out and about during the next few weeks.

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.