



MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the
Week of October 4, 2010**

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Rural Electric Co-ops

JEFFERSON CITY – I hope you’ve had a chance to get outdoors and enjoy this fine fall weather we’ve been having the past couple of weeks. It’s been a real blessing for our area farmers who’ve been able to get into their fields and harvest their crops. It’s also been ideal weather for folks who enjoy attending all of the fall festivals that pop up every weekend. It won’t be long until we’re complaining about how cold and miserable it is outside, so get out and enjoy this beautiful weather while you still can.

This week I had the honor of being named a “Legislator of the Year” by members of the Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives, along with my Senate colleague, Brag Lager of Savannah. We were both singled out for recognition at the annual meeting in Kansas City for our work on behalf of Missouri’s electric coops during the 2010 legislative session. Senate Bill 795 includes a provision that requires association coops to pay ten dollars annually instead of state sales taxes. I also sponsored legislation last session to help our New Generation Coops continue to succeed. These are the coops that turn corn into ethanol or soybeans into biodiesel so we can get more of our fuel from the Midwest while reducing our reliance on fuel imported from the Middle East.

October is Cooperative Month, and this year marks 75 years that our local electric coops have been providing electricity and services to rural Missourians. Cooperatives are basically organizations that are owned by members and exist to provide service to those members. Our electric coops were created in 1935 to bring electricity to farms and rural residents because utility companies saw no profit in providing electricity to rural areas. The rural electric coops, however, were not focused on profits. Their mission was to provide the same electrical service

to rural residents that folks in the cities took for granted. A lot of older residents can still remember the first time they were able to flip a switch and watch the lights come on. We still rely on our local electric coops today.

The Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives was founded in 1937 to help our local coops work together and to provide a voice for all electric coops in the state Legislature and in Congress.

In northeast Missouri, we are served by several local electric coops, including the Northeast Missouri Electric Power Cooperative in Palmyra, Lewis County Rural Electric Cooperative in Lewistown, Missouri Rural Electric Cooperative in Palmyra, Tri-County Electric Cooperative in Lancaster, Macon Electric Cooperative in Macon, North Central Electric Cooperative in Milan, Consolidated Electric Cooperative in Mexico, Cuivre River Electric Cooperative in Troy and Boone Electric Cooperative in Columbia.

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.