

Week of November 15, 2010



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Share the Harvest

Make no mistake; deer hunting is a popular activity in Missouri. With the current abundance of white-tailed deer, hunters should have ample opportunity to prove their outdoor and woodsman skills. As a matter of fact, 97,856 deer were tagged opening weekend alone. And with the opportunity to bring home the big buck and fill the freezer with meat, comes a second opportunity: to assist in taking care of one's neighbors and friends through the Share the Harvest program.

According to the Missouri Department of Conservation, so far during the 2010 deer seasons, 4,243 hunters have donated more than 213,000 pounds of venison. Some people might say that they don't want to participate in programs like Share the Harvest because it can be a hassle, but nothing could be further from the truth. All a hunter needs to do is take the deer to the nearest participating meat processor and let them know how much of the meat they would like to donate, whether that be part or all of the deer. Typically the hunter pays the processing fees for the donation unless the processor has local money available to subsidize the processing.

Local charitable organizations will then pick up the meat from the processor and distribute it. This nutritious and valuable meat will then help feed the people in the local communities throughout our district. This is important for many reasons, mainly because food banks and food pantries are unfortunately not always able to keep up with the amount of need and materials and there are families in our state that don't always have enough dependable red meat in their diets for maximum nutrition.

It is a simple matter if local organizations want to get involved with the Share the Harvest program. If you are a member of a club or organization that would be willing to raise funds for this program or to help coordinate the program in your area, you can contact

your local conservation agent or the Missouri Department of Conservation in Jefferson City by phone at 573-522-4115 or online at mdc.mo.gov.

It seems like such a small thing, to donate the fruits of one's labor to those less fortunate. I encourage people who participate in Missouri's grand tradition of hunting to think about utilizing this program. Hunters get to indulge in their passion and, in doing so, can give a helping hand to those in need.

As always, please feel free to contact me or my staff with any questions or concerns at any time. We look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions and trying to answer any questions you may have. You can reach us by phone at 866-277-0882 (toll-free) or 573-751-2272, or by fax at 573-526-7381.

Senator David Pearce serves Bates, Cass, Johnson and Vernon counties in the 31st State Senatorial District.

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