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Committees

Agriculture Policy
Appropriations-Transportation and Economic
Development
Conservation & Natural Resources

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hello from the capitol!

It is getting very hard to be inside at the capitol with the days getting longer and warmer. Every morning I think of everything I could or should be doing on the farm.

There were several events happening this week. First, Monday was the start of spring turkey season. I woke up at 5:00 a.m. but thought it was too dark. I woke up at 6:00 a.m. and the turkeys were gobbling by the time I got to the woods. I attempted to call in several gobblers but I must not have sounded too appealing because I was not very successful. Well, maybe next time.

The next event was the end of tax season. I will actually get to see my wife again. For those of you who don't know, Becky is an accountant and works for a CPA. She has been working late every night and on weekends for the last couple of months. With us working a lot at the capitol, it has been very hectic.

It was a great pleasure for me to have the Westphalia R-III Fatima Lady Comets basketball team come up to the capitol this past week. We presented them with a resolution on their sectional win in Class 3 Basketball. Go Comets!

In committee action this week the creation of the omnibus bills started. This means that the chairmen of some committees start to put similar pieces of legislation that have been heard in their committee into one bill. Our gravel bill, HB 628, was put into the Conservation Committee Omnibus Bill. House Bill 628 is on the perfection calendar awaiting House floor debate also. It has a better chance of passing by being put into an omnibus bill.

With just a few weeks left in the legislative session, time for getting bills passed is very precious. In floor action this week we heard a few bills that took up several hours of debate without coming to a vote. These bills were laid aside and probably won't be taken up again.

Some of the bills passed out of the House this week were HB 845, HB 461, and HB 98.

House Bill 845 requires the Office of the Secretary of State to request the database of all applicants for hunting and fishing licenses from the Department of Conservation on a monthly basis beginning September 1, 2007. The Secretary of State is required to compare the license applicant list against the database of registered voters and mail a voter registration application to any individual who is an eligible, non-registered voter.

House Bill 461 exempts the State Water Patrol from the merit system and specifies certain duties for the Commissioner of the State Water Patrol including:

1. Developing rules for instruction and discipline, making administrative rules and regulations, and establishing duty hours;
2. Dividing the state into districts and assigning patrol members to the districts;
3. Establishing, by general order, promotional procedures and increasing, by promotion, the rank of officers after at least one year of service.

All patrol officers and radio personnel are required to be 21 years of age or older, be United States and Missouri citizens, have certain educational and physical requirements, and never been convicted of a felony.

House Bill 98 authorizes each area agency on aging to establish a volunteer program for the transportation of elderly individuals to scheduled, healthcare related appointments. Participating volunteers must use their own vehicles and may be reimbursed by the agency at the same rate as state employees for any mileage allowance or reimbursement due. Subject to appropriation, each area agency may request funding of up to \$1,000 annually from the Department of Health and Senior Services to assist with the administration costs of the program.

The Senate finally passed the very important Mohela bill. This bill will give authority to the Mohela Board to appropriate 350 million dollars for construction projects as well as scholarships for institutions of higher education. This bill will now come to the House for approval.

As always, it is an honor and pleasure to serve as your state representative.