

## Rep. Rob Schaaf to host Forums

In order to bring the legislative process closer to the people, I will begin our eighth year of weekly legislative forums starting January 8 in the North



basement meeting room of the Andrew County Courthouse in Savannah.

The meetings will be held every Friday from 6:30 to 8:00 PM and will alternate between the Savannah Courthouse and the Private Dining Room in the Student Union Building at Missouri Western State University. There is an outer door to the basement room along the North side of the Courthouse, and an awning over the entrance on the South side of the Student Union Building.

The forum series will last through the last Friday in April, except that there will be no forum March 26th due to a conflict. The public is invited to attend and discuss any issue.

The schedule will be as follows:

- January 15, MWSU
- January 22, Savannah
- January 29, MWSU
- February 5, Savannah
- February 12, MWSU
- February 19, Savannah
- February 26, MWSU
- March 5, Savannah
- March 12, MWSU
- March 19, Savannah
- April 2, Savannah
- April 9, MWSU
- April 16, Savannah
- April 23, MWSU
- April 30, Savannah

I would like to thank the Andrew County Clerk and Commission and Missouri Western State University for providing the meeting spaces, the media for making the meetings known, and all the people who have attended the forums over the years.

## AFBF Beyond the Gateway

### "Cut Through the Chase"

Tracy T. Grondine | Guest Writer  
MISSOURI FARM BUREAU

Farm Bureau members nationwide convene in Seattle in January for the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) 91st annual meeting, offering attendees opportunities to play a bigger role in the global community while achieving greater success at home.

At AFBF's 1919 organizing meeting in Chicago, New York Farm Bureau President S. L. Strivings said, "Farmers must get past their own gateways and get out and see what is going on in the world."

Fast forward 91 years. Farm Bureau remains the premier grassroots organization with the same ideals and principles of strengthening the lives of rural Americans and building strong, prosperous farm communities.

While farmers' challenges are the same as they were in 1919 with regard to weather, government regulation and commodity prices, farmers can no longer stop after field work. American farmers today hold a predominant status in global affairs, dealing with issues like world trade, a global customer base and their public image.

As a result, modern farmers and ranchers must wear many hats. In addition to producing food for a hungry world, farmers must also be teachers, economists, scientists, lobbyists and spokespersons, and must address issues such as livestock care, food safety and biotechnology which face unfounded attacks from animal welfare groups and others.

At this year's AFBF annual meeting, farmer voting delegates will discuss, debate and vote on tentative resolutions to formulate policy on issues vital to farmers, ranchers and rural residents.

Additionally, farmers will learn to use new tools to help them handle today's challenges "...past their own gateways," while maintaining the ideals and mission AFBF's founders envisioned in 1919. Mr. Strivings would be proud.

(Tracy Taylor Grondine is director of media relations for the American Farm Bureau.)

## House and Senate Leaders Announce Shared Priorities

With a focus on Missouri's future, House and Senate leaders, joined by Lt. Governor Peter Kinder, today announced their shared priorities they plan to accomplish early in the legislative session. Those priorities include protecting Missouri taxpayers and families, ethics reforms and urging Congress to act in the best interest of Missourians.

"In 2010, we will move with great fortitude in facing our state's financial crisis head on," said Kinder. "I am encouraged by our legislative leaders and their commitment to find common-sense solutions for Missouri families. As politicians in Washington promote more government to fix our problems, we will remain committed to our core principles of life and liberty for all Missouri families."

Speaker of the House Ron Richard, R-Joplin, said together they will take every step they can to keep hard-working Missourians' pay in their own pockets. Richard also placed an emphasis on economic development and job creation in Missouri.

"The General Assembly serves the people of Missouri, and we will work to produce meaningful legislation that directly improves the lives of our citizens," said Richard. "Creating jobs, retaining the jobs already in place and making Missouri an attractive business climate is the key to the success of our state and the heartbeat of Missouri citizens - this has been, and will continue to be a primary focus."

Senate Leader Charlie Shields, R-St. Joseph, reinforced the call to protect taxpayers. He added that Missouri's best economic development tool is an educated work force.

"We must not raise taxes and we must continue our commitment of making education our top budget priority," Shields said. "We are facing an on-going budget crisis and to succeed, we must have a governor who will do his job and present a balanced budget that is not short-sighted."

Senate Majority Floor Leader Kevin Engler, R-Farmington, and House Majority Floor Leader Steven Tilley, R-Perryville, said the Senate and House would continue to build a partnership that will get things done for the people of Missouri.

Engler added that the House and Senate will call on the governor to issue prompt income tax refunds.

"Every Missourian owed an income tax refund should get that money back as soon as possible," Engler said. "When the governor holds onto rightfully owed refunds like he did last year, he's essentially taking an interest-free loan on the backs' of taxpayers without their permission."

"Unlike Washington D.C., we want to make it very clear in Missouri that we are listening to our citizens and committed to taking a common sense approach to solving our problems," said Tilley. "Because I believe, despite a tough

environment and issues with the federal government, that we are going to be successful in Missouri because our state legislature will work together for our



citizens. Whether it's greater accountability, more transparency, or prudent fiscal spending we will deliver for Missouri."

The leaders said other early priorities would include requiring more oversight of federal stimulus dollars spent in Missouri, preventing double-dipping into state unemployment benefits, and stopping Medicaid crooks.

"As we move into the new year, budget issues will continue to be a high priority item. With hard earned tax dollars, we need to make sure that fraud and abuse - not only in Medicaid, but across state government - are found and that the taxpayers' dollars are put to high investment uses such as education and job opportunities." - Sen. Chuck Purgason

The Second Regular Session of the 95th Missouri General Assembly began Jan. 6. The leaders outlined their shared priorities one week before the Governor is anticipated to unveil his budget in the State of the State.



## Sen. McCaskill Launches New Website

"I'm happy to announce that my office is launching a new website at <http://McCaskill.Senate.gov> to help me serve you, my bosses in Missouri," Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-MO) said last week.

"I'd love for you to visit and take a look around," Sen. McCaskill said. "Here are some of the most exciting new features:

- A map of Missouri showing my office locations, grants for the state, and news, all searchable by ZIP Code.
- A streamlined information directory for Missourians who need help navigating the Federal Government.
- All-new issues pages detailing my opinions and positions on important issues facing Missouri families.

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