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# Prayers for Japan, Preparing Missouri for a Catastrophe, and a New Appointment

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Prayers for Japan, Preparing Missouri for a Catastrophe, and a New Appointment

*By ROB MAYER*

Few events are felt round the world, and unfortunately, the ongoing devastation in Japan from last week's earthquake and tsunami is one of those events. Thousands of people have lost their lives and many more are feared to be missing and injured after one of the largest earthquakes ever recorded spawned a deadly tsunami that left a path of destruction across Japan's east coast. It's disheartening to think about all of the families who lost loved ones during this tragedy, an event the world rarely encounters. Our thoughts and prayers are with this nation as they begin to recover and rebuild their lives.

Even though it was almost two hundred years ago, nearly all of us who live in the New Madrid seismic zone have heard about the 1811 and 1812 earthquakes. And, although in the back of our minds, fear the day this fault may again cause devastation as it did 200 years ago.

At 2 a.m. on December 16, 1811, a series of three great earthquakes began with many more tremors and aftershocks in between. Witnesses of the historic Missouri event said the land rose and fell like a swell on the sea. The earthquakes created waves on the Mississippi River and made the great river flow backwards. It is believed the earthquake was moderately felt across a million square miles and as far away as New York City – where it rang church bells. They couldn't measure earthquakes back then like we do now,

but the U.S. Geological Survey says the New Madrid earthquakes twice reached up to 8.0, ranking them among the most intense earthquakes to ever happen in the lower United States.

I would encourage you to have your home as prepared as possible should another earthquake strike. This includes a home emergency supply kit, flashlights, portable radios, first aid kit, nonperishable food, water, and other necessary items. A great resource for earthquake preparedness is your local University of Missouri Extension office, reach them at (573) 547-4505.

As the state senator for the bootheel of Missouri, I am keenly aware of the impact another earthquake could have on my district and on our state. That's why I filed Senate Bill 301. If enacted, it would establish the Missouri Homeowners Mutual Insurance Company Act. The Missouri Homeowners Mutual Insurance Company would be an independent public corporation for the purpose of providing insurance coverage for the physical and personal property of Missouri home and apartment owners and renters. This new company would offer affordable homeowners' insurance policies that would include earthquake damage coverage.

I pray we are never confronted with an earthquake again, but please take the time to prepare your home. It never hurts to be prepared, and I'm working to ready our state.

I am also pleased to have sponsored Robert Culler as a member of the Missouri Agricultural and Small Business Development Authority. He was confirmed by the full Senate earlier this month to serve in this role. Mr. Culler is a lifelong resident of Pemiscot County and is the executive vice-president of First State Bank and Trust Company in Caruthersville.

The authority is an 8-member panel that reviews and approves loan applications for the authority's programs, and sets policy and direction related to operation of the authority. From loans to help with marketing a small agribusiness to financing for value-added agriculture enterprises, this board plays an important role in supporting our state's number one industry. Mr. Culler's experience in banking in a rural community will certainly be a benefit to the work of the Missouri Agricultural and Small Business Development Authority.

Please feel free to contact me throughout the year with any comments, questions, or issues using the information listed below and on my website at [www.senate.mo.gov/mayer](http://www.senate.mo.gov/mayer).

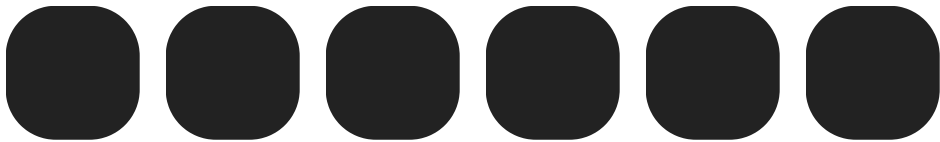
*Rob Mayer, R-Dexter, represents the 25th State Senatorial District in the Missouri State Senate and serves the state as the President Pro Tem of the State Senate.*

**ABOVE PICTURE:** *Sen. Mayer with Robert Culler during his Gubernatorial Appointments Committee hearing to become a member of the Missouri Agricultural and Small Business Development Authority.*

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