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Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, October 16th

OCTOBER 19TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, October 16th

Congressman Jason Smith Capitol Report: Deja Vu All Over Again Friday, October 16, 2015

It has happened again. Last week, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) caused another spill in Colorado. This time, it was gray water spilled into a creek while working to clean up the Standard Mine. The EPA did not immediately notify the community or affected elected officials.

This spill comes two months after EPA contractors catastrophically dumped three million gallons of toxic water from the Gold King mine into the Animas River, potentially tainting drinking water for thousands. Both the Gold King mine spill and the spill of gray water happened on EPA Superfund sites. The EPA's website explains that the "Superfund program is responsible for cleaning up some of the nation's most contaminated land," but instead of cleaning up our contaminated land, the EPA only made it worse.

The EPA spends \$158 million of taxpayer money on its public relations budget. There are about 200 full-time employees in this division, and the EPA still manages to give another \$15 million to outside public relations consultants. The EPA uses our money to spin the facts, telling Americans to trust them on the disastrous rules and regulations they force on rural America. Take for example the Clean Power Plan that would make energy significantly more expensive or the Waters of the United States rule which could put every puddle under federal jurisdiction.

I have sponsored three important bills recently to help rein in this out of control agency. First, the No Exemptions for EPA Act states clearly that the EPA should be treated like private companies and held accountable when they cause spills, and it closes any legal loopholes just to make sure. The second is the EPA Pays Act which simply says that when the EPA spills, they have to pay the folks affected. We know the EPA has the money! This bill would use the funds from their public relations account – the same one used to lobby for the Waters of the United States rule – to repair the damage. The third bill is the Judgment Fund Taxpayer Accountability Act which would increase transparency and require agencies like the EPA to fully disclose the amount of money being paid out due to court judgments against the agency. This will show us which agencies are fixing the messes they create and which need to do better by Americans.

It's clear to me that local communities should decide how to best manage their natural resources, not unelected bureaucrats, and the legal system also agrees. Last week, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled to block the Environmental Protection Agency's controversial Waters of the United States provision, effectively stopping the egregious power grab nationwide. EPA bureaucrats are doing more harm than good and I'm using every avenue at my disposal to defund their hypocritical actions.

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Nixon Orders Flags to Be Lowered at Every Fire Station

OCTOBER 14TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Nixon Orders Flags to Be Lowered at Every Fire Station

Jefferson City, Missouri - Gov. Jay Nixon has ordered the flags to be lowered at every fire station in the state of Missouri and at the Fire Fighters Memorial, located in Kingdom City, Mo. to honor Kansas City Fire Department firefighters Larry Leggio and John Mesh, who were killed in the line of duty on Monday (Oct. 12).

In addition, the order from Gov. Nixon to lower the U.S. and Missouri flags also includes government buildings in Cass, Clay, Jackson and Platte counties.

“All Missourians mourn the tragic loss of these brave heroes who gave their lives to save the lives of others,” Gov. Nixon said. “This tragedy is a stark reminder of the difficult and dangerous circumstances that firefighters face each and every day to save lives and protect our communities. When they see the lowered flags, I ask that Missourians pause to honor the ultimate sacrifice made by Larry Leggio and John Mesh and reflect on the dedication of firefighters across our state. Firefighters put themselves in harm’s way for us. Today, and every day, we must stand with them.”

The flags will remain at half-staff through the dates of the funerals for both firefighters

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Tila Hubrecht's Capitol Report - Friday, September 24, 2015

SEPTEMBER 28TH 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Tila Hubrecht's Capitol Report - Friday, September 24, 2015

I am happy to report to you from last week's report a follow up regarding Mo DOT and the Cultural Diversity Training. The upcoming October class has been cancelled for the time being. I am very pleased with this cancellation. I want to make it clear though, my disapproval is not about learning or becoming more knowledgeable of other cultures and issues.

My disapproval is related to the conditions of our roads and bridges throughout Missouri and the wise use of Missouri tax money. In our district alone, we have quite a lot of bridges that are not far from being closed due to safety. Many Missourians feel that taxes are burdensome and too costly. I feel very strongly that people's lives matter more and safety should come first. Secondly, I feel that Missourians should be consulted as to what they want their tax dollars spent on, Missouri citizens are the ones who work to pay this tax money and should have a say as to how the tax money is spent.

I will continue to advocate for safety first in Mo DOTs funding priorities and encourage you to voice your support to Mo DOT for safety first in their

operations. I will also advocate for the wise use of the tax money the state receives.

I hope everyone is enjoying the Stoddard County Fair this week. Fairs are a wonderful time and place to see how great our area is and what things are grown or made in our area. In our district, the 151st, we are blessed to have a wide variety of agricultural products and businesses, everything from row crops to cattle to irrigation businesses to implement sales. Farmers face many challenges at this time but I am confident, with all of us supporting and encouraging our farmers, they will succeed and so will we all! How can we support our farmers and the Ag businesses in our area? We can buy locally made and home grown items whenever possible. Many of our area businesses are selling items from Missouri producers, buy from these vendors whenever possible. If you have friends that live in other areas of our nation, you can always buy them a made in Missouri item and give it to them for a gift also! Our state has an incredible history of agriculture, in fact, agriculture is vitally important to our state's economy. You and I can help make Missouri a top producer and exporter of agricultural goods in our nation!

I had the wonderful opportunity this week to discuss issues facing our developmentally disabled. As you may remember, during the last session I filed a bill related to the Schools for the Severely Disabled. The bill, if it had passed, would have formed a committee to review the regulations and rules these schools are required to follow, the committee would have then made recommendations to the General Assembly as to what we, at the State level, can do to allow the teachers and administrators to better serve these special students. I was able to successfully get the bill attached as an amendment to the Education Omnibus Bill but the entire bill died in the Senate the last week of session.

I was disappointed with this outcome but learned a lot through the process. I am continuing to learn about the issues and challenges facing our School for the Severely Disabled. Developmentally disabled students face long-term challenges that significantly delay or limit mental or physical development and substantially interfere with life activities. I am encouraged by our local support of children with developmental disabilities. In our area we have, that I am aware of, three non-profit agencies and one for-profit agency that serve developmentally disabled children and adults. There are many ways to become involved to support these

groups and to volunteer if you are able.

If you know of someone that would benefit from services, you can contact the Poplar Bluff Satellite Regional Office at 2351 Kanell Blvd., Poplar Bluff, MO 63901 or call 573-840-9300.

I look forward to advocating for the Developmentally Disabled in the future and will be working to remove burdensome regulations that are not based in common sense from the Schools for the Severely Disabled.

Until next week,

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Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, September 25, 2015

Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, September 25, 2015

8th Congressional District - Missouri - History was made this week when Pope Francis addressed a joint session of Congress and was the first Pontiff ever to do so. Some of the most poignant remarks from Pope Francis focused on the importance of religious liberty. His observations come during a time when the religious rights of millions across the world and here in America are being trampled.

For centuries the United States of America has led the way on tolerance and religious freedom. More than 350 years ago, the first religious liberty law was established when Maryland was just a colony. In 1791, freedom of religion officially became part of the Bill of Rights. As the pope said in his address, “It is important today, as in the past, the voice of faith continue to be heard.”

Today though, our government has become intolerant of religion in any form. Right here in Missouri’s Eighth Congressional District, I had to stand up to the National Park Service when it began requiring a permit and a 48-hour notice before baptisms could occur within the Ozark National Scenic Riverways. These conditions were not required for fishing or boating. Under Obamacare, employers are forced to provide health insurances that cover services and medications that violate their religious beliefs. Additionally, Christian business owners across the country are being fined and hauled to court for choosing not to use their artistic abilities for events that are contrary to their religious beliefs.

Our Constitution says, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” It is my hope that the pope’s words reach all corners of our country reminding Americans that we need to return to the guiding principles upon which our nation was founded, including free expression of religion and religious tolerance.

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Medicare Prescription Drug Sign-Up

SEPTEMBER 21ST 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

Medicare Prescription Drug Sign-Up

Age Spots by Ruth Dockins

Medicare Prescription Drug Sign-Up Begins October 15th

Finally, the crisp, cool weather of fall is here (or nearly here)! We can start looking at football games, bon-fires and new Medicare D choices.

As most of you know the Medicare D (prescription drug) sign-up for 2016 starts Oct. 15 and runs through Dec. 7. You have received, or will soon receive (depending on when this article is printed) a letter from your Medicare Prescription Drug plan the "Plan Annual Notice of Change (ANOC) and Evidence of Coverage". This letter will be a notice from your current plan outlining their 2016 formulary, benefit design and/or premium changes. They must send this to you by September 30.

Be sure to read this information carefully because many times there are significant changes in the premium, formulary and/or tier levels of the medication. If you are not satisfied with the new plan information please make a list of your medications, the size and how often you take them, and what pharmacy you use. Then contact Jackie, Liz, Meagan or me at 573-335-3331 or 1-800-392-8771, between October 15 and Dec. 7 so that we can assist you in finding the best plan

for you for 2016. We will also need your Medicare number, effective dates for part a & b and your address. (By the way, never give this information to someone who calls you.)

We will have a form on our website that you can complete if you choose, it will be under Information and Assistance, Medicare D enrollment. You can print it and complete it and send it to us at the address on the bottom of the form. Our website is www.agingmatters2u.com We can then enter the information and will contact you with the best plans for you so that you can make an informed decision.

If you want to do this yourself you can go to www.medicare.gov click on “find health and drug plans” and follow the prompts.

Late in the month of September you will receive your new Medicare & You handbook. This is a very handy book to have; it answers many questions and has lots of good information in it. You can also download a copy online at www.Medicare.gov.

By October 16 employer/union and other group health plans must tell all Medicare eligible enrollees whether or not their drug coverage is creditable. Hang on to this notice! If you ever enroll in Medicare Part D you will need the letter to prove that you did have creditable coverage before you enrolled.

We will be having enrollment events at the following locations:

Oct. 15 – Aging Matters office (call for location 335-3331) 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Nov. 4 – Twin Towers, 302 N. E St., Poplar Bluff 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Nov. 4 – Altenburg Library, 66 Poplar St. Altenburg noon – 6 p.m.

Nov. 5 – Perryville Library, 800 City Park Dr. 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Nov. 5 – Caruthersville RSVP office, 1105 Carlton 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

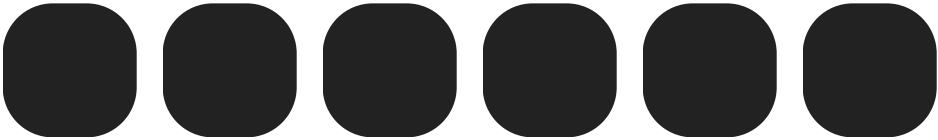
Nov. 10 – OAKS Sr Center, 305 Cresap, Sikeston 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Nov. 18 – Oaks Sr. Center, 900 Kennett Sr., Kennett 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

If you have questions please call 573-335-3331 or 1-800-392-8771.

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