

July 15, 2011 - The "Loop"

Greetings! I pray you are having a blessed summer. It sure has been a hot one! Continuing with the main issues that were passed in the first half of the 107th General Assembly, it is my hope that "The Loop" has been helpful to further give you, those whom I represent, an insight into the work accomplished in the Halls of the House.

Blue Alert Law – The Governor signed into law House Bill 724, the "Blue Alert Act" that was passed by the House. The new law allows the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) to utilize the existing "Amber Alert" infrastructure to notify the public in an efficient and timely manner about violent criminals who have either severely injured or killed a law enforcement officer. The law costs nothing to Tennessee taxpayers, yet it greatly enhances the information available to the public about violent criminals who are at-large in their communities.

Unclaimed Property – Urging all citizens to visit an updated State website that features hundreds of listings for unclaimed property, I have met with the local offices in my district to encourage this unclaimed money. In terms of property get into the hands of those who rightfully have it due to them. Tennessee does not hold to a law of escheat, meaning that unclaimed property after a certain time period "returns to the crown". The State—through the Treasury Department—holds unclaimed property until it is reclaimed by the rightful owner or by the owner's heirs (if the owner is deceased). Who knows your name could be on the list. Anyone can search for unclaimed properties by name at this website:

<http://treasury.tn.gov/unclaim/FindUnclaimed.html>.

Taxpayer Funds Saved Through Increased Buying Power – We passed a common sense initiative that allows any emergency communications district to purchase emergency equipment under the same terms of a legal bid initiated by any other district. The new law will help save Tennesseans' hard-earned taxpayer dollars during times of emergency when every dollar counts.

Flags for Veterans – At the urging of House Members, in February, the Tennessee Department of Veterans Affairs changed State Cemetery policies and procedures to permit decoration of all graves with American flags at each State Veterans Cemetery (East, West, and Middle) for Veterans Day and Memorial Day. Previously, the placement of American flags on graves was permitted only on Memorial Day. The department's change in policy regarding placement of flags on graves on Veterans Day is expected to conform to the anticipated change in Federal policy. The placement and removal of such American flags will be coordinated with the applicable Cemetery Director.

Storm Shelter Tax Relief – Concerns over how best to help Tennesseans recover from tornadoes and strong storms led us to introduce legislation that provides a tax exemption for expenses resulting from the construction of a tornado or storm shelter, as well as improvements to existing shelters. 2011 has been a severe weather season in Tennessee! In order for an individual to qualify, the sales price per item must be \$3,200 or less. The legislation will soon become law.

It is a pleasure to serve you. You are work worth doing. Look forward to seeing you at the county fairs!

Blessings