

Bill's Seat – A Report from the North Carolina Legislature - May 9, 2010

By Representative Bill Faison

The 2010 Short Session Opens This Week: The Legislature meets for a Long Session in odd numbered years to consider new legislation and to do a Budget for the next two years. In the even numbered years the Legislature meets to tweak the Budget, consider bills left over from the Long Session and to consider new bills recommended by Study Committees that met between Sessions. This Wednesday the Short Session Convenes.

Study Committees: It is important for our community that I serve on Study Committees that consider new laws affecting our community. Between Sessions I Chaired the Study Committee on High Speed Internet Access in Rural and Urban Areas, and served on the Study Committee on Use of 911 Funds, Coyote Nuisance Removal, and Joint Finance Committee.

High Speed Internet in Rural and Urban Areas: Our children's education and job growth are closely linked to true high speed internet availability at an affordable price. True high speed internet is hard to come by in rural areas. We do not fit the business model for the big phone companies and cable operators. We do fit the business model for many of the telephone co-ops and others. The big companies are trying to make it more difficult for cities and counties to provide high speed internet to its people. I have been working to get you more and better information on where high speed internet is and to have high speed internet be made available to you. There is still much to do.

Use of 911 Funds: We all depend on 911 to get us help in an emergency. The call to the center starts the process that ends when the first responder (volunteer firemen, deputy, EMS) arrives at our side. We all pay a portion of our monthly phone bill (less than 71 cents) to support 911 services. Prior legislation prevented the money from being used to provide radios for first providers. I have been working with Sheriff Pendergrass, Sheriff Welch, Andy Gates and Vernon Massengill to change this. The Study Committee has recommended new legislation allowing 911 funds to be spent on first responder radios.

Coyotes: Coyotes are taking calves and fawns, hurting our farmers and hunters. I worked on this study committee to get a bill that allows for special hold traps to be used by folks growing any form of livestock as a way of trying to reduce the damage done by coyotes.

Contact Me: We need more and better jobs. We need to protect and promote education. We need to look after our senior population. We need to do this with a government that is more efficient. We do not need new taxes. The Short Session will have many challenges affecting our community and our kids. I hope you will contact me and let me know what you think as new issues come up. Please contact me at Bill.Faison@ncleg.net to share your thoughts.