

## **Agriculture Development Teams** *Sowing the Seeds of Peace in Afghanistan*

### **Senator Kit Bond On-the-Record -**

“One of the best remedies to terrorism is a paycheck and by helping Afghans farmers develop skills to support their families, Missourians are contributing to not only rural development, but a stable Afghanistan. These Guardsmen and women are literally sowing the seeds of peace in Afghanistan's Nangarhar province.”

### **NEED**

Like Missouri almost 75 percent of the population of Afghanistan is linked to the agricultural sector. Recognizing the importance of agriculture to the country, Bond has long-stressed that improvements in this sector will not only improve the lives of the Afghans, but will help create the conditions for enduring security and stability – which is why this goal is part of his *Roadmap to Success* for the region.

### **HISTORY OF THE ADT**

- On a visit to Afghanistan in 2006, Bond met with General Eikenberry and former Secretary of Agriculture Jim Mosely about adopting an extension-like system modeled after the one here in the United States to develop Afghan Agriculture.
- Bond followed up from this visit by securing money for the project through the Senate Appropriations Committee in the 2007 supplemental. Unfortunately, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) who received the federal dollars Bond appropriated lacked the capacity to get the project off the ground.
- Not willing to give up on this critical project, Bond turned to the National Guard, particularly General Vaughn, who, working with the Missouri Farm Bureau and Missouri National Guard, developed and implemented the now-successful project.
- In July 2007, Bond sent a member of his staff to Afghanistan on an initial planning and scouting mission to support and promote the creation of the Missouri National Guard Agribusiness Development Team and again in April 2008 to provide further support and report back on the tremendous progress they had made.
- The first ADT team led by the Missouri National Guard started work in Nangarhar Province upon their arrival in February of 2008. This first team recently returned home to Missouri last December and the 2<sup>nd</sup> team is now in place.
- While in Afghanistan this past December, the Senator visited this Agribusiness Development Team to see their success first-hand.

### **WHO ARE THE MEMBERS OF THE ADT**

Born out of a close cooperation with the Missouri Farm Bureau, University of Missouri-Columbia, Lincoln University, and the Missouri National Guard, the Agriculture Development Team (ADT) is made up of National Guard personnel with a wide range of civilian and agricultural backgrounds in agronomy, veterinary medicine, hydrology, marketing, soil science and engineering.

### **ADT'S PROVEN SUCCESS**

These agriculture experts are now teaching Afghans the skills they need grow and harvest alternative crops, like wheat. These teams' strategies focus on building relationships and trust at provincial and district levels, influencing hearts and minds and denying the negative influences of radical Taliban.

Not only are Afghan farmers improving their own lives and their land through sustainable agriculture, the narcotics trade is also being supplanted. Poppy production in Nangarhar province has virtually been eliminated according the United Nations and much of this is due to the successful engagement strategies employed by the ADT and the U.S.- led Regional Command East.

Because of the Missouri Guard's success, subsequent ADT teams from Texas, Kansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska and Indiana are all either scheduled to deploy or have already deployed. Following Missouri's lead, each of these ADT teams will bring their unique skill-sets and backgrounds to the effort.