WASHINGTON – U.S. Rep. Jo Ann Emerson (MO-08) announced today that the mean center of the U.S. population remains in the Eighth Congressional District of Missouri. Following the 200 Census, the population center was declared by the Census to be at a location 2.8 miles east of Edgar Springs, Missouri, in Phelps County. After analyzing the data from the 2010 Census, the new population center is 2.7 miles northeast of Plato in Texas County, Missouri.

The announcement was made today at the National Press Club in Washington, DC, by U.S. Census Director Robert Groves.

"It's a unique distinction for our congressional district to contain the population center of the entire country, and I think it is in many ways fitting that the center falls right in the middle of the Heartland," Emerson said. "Our congressional district is a patriotic place, we are home to strong communities, we place a high value on public service, and, to me, we represent the very heart and soul of our nation. No matter where you live in America, you would find a warm welcome if you came to Plato and sat down at the coffee shop in the morning."

Emerson also noted that the southward shift of the population center reflects the growth of population in southern U.S. states.

"It's just a short drive from Edgar Springs to Plato in Missouri, but you think about the larger demographic shift in our country. It kind of boggles your mind to think about the movement of millions of people around our country and how we can simply represent that with the mean population center statistic. This is a great teaching tool for our local schools as well as for students around the nation who are learning more about the makeup of our country's population and how the trends affect our national identity."