

Nation how caring about one another and rallying together and working together can overcome any tragedy.

I also want to thank the Small Business Administration, Phil Lader especially, the Administrator. Just today, the Small Business Administration has announced that Taos County, where this fire took place, is a Federal disaster area. That means that the residents of Lama who lost their homes, and there is a total of 31 families, can now apply for low-interest loans. In the same vein, businesses that were struck down by the fire can apply for low-interest loans to rebuild.

Mr. Speaker, here is evidence of the Federal Government being able to help. Recently, the Federal Emergency Management Agency went to northern New Mexico to inspect damage, and they are working to see if they can be helpful, along with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Here we have a situation where nature strikes, there are a lot of victims, and then the Federal Government can come in with some good programs and well-trained people and help citizens.

Mr. Speaker, New Mexico is also not burning. Only 1 percent of northern Taos County burned. We are sending a message out to the rest of the country from New Mexico that we welcome visitors; that the State is not on fire; that we have some of the best hiking and fishing and cultural representation of our country in our State. And we hope that despite this tragedy, that America will come to New Mexico.

The fire is under control. The Carson and the Santa Fe are still at risk, and if visitors come they have to be very careful about not initiating any camp fires or throwing matches on the ground or being careless because we are faced with a very, very precarious situation, especially in the Carson.

Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude by once again thanking members of the U.S. Forest Service for the splendid job they did in containing these two fires in New Mexico.

Mr. Speaker, the information referred to earlier is submitted herewith:

REPORT ON THE HONDO WILDFIRE AND OUR APPRECIATION TO THOSE WHO FOUGHT THE BLAZE

(By Congressman Bill Richardson)

At 12:30 PM on Sunday, May 5, our Taos Zone Dispatcher, Paul Mondragon, received a report of a fire spreading in San Cristobal canyon. Phil Tafoya, a Carson National Forest law enforcement officer, was dispatched to the scene. Fifteen minutes later, Marc Trujillo, the Carson's Fire Management Officer, ordered an air attack. By 2:15 PM planes were dropping their first loads in efforts to save homes and contain the fire.

In the meantime Ron Burnam, Red River Fire Marshall, and his fire crew as well as the Hondo/Saco and Taos Fire Departments were on site attempting to save homes from the ground. By 3:30 PM, Paul and Marc were ordering bulldozers and other heavy equipment to build fire lines around homes and communities. By 4:00 PM, it was apparent that this was a raging fire storm and Lama residents' lives were in danger as the storm headed their way. Carson National Forest

and local fire officials recommended evacuation of the Lama area.

At 4:00 PM local forest officials, realizing the severity of the fire, requested a full Type I fire team. Within hours this team of world class fire fighting specialists began to arrive. At 5:30 PM Carson National Forest Supervisor Leonard Lucero and Marc Trujillo flew over the fire and sized up the situation. By this time the fire had reached 9000 feet in elevation and was headed for Flag Mountain, just south of the Village of Questa.

Given the rate of spread, Carson National Forest officials in coordination with State Forestry and local officials and the State Police began the evacuation of residents on the southern edge of Questa and the Town of Red River. Before midnight the Class I Team, headed by incident Commander Gary Loving, arrived, having just finished work on the Dome fire near Los Alamos, New Mexico.

Within 24 hours, 32 twenty-person fire crews, six helicopters, 24 fire engines, and five tankers were working to protect homes of local residents and contain the fire. A small city of over 1000 firefighters, fire fighting strategists, safety and information officers, cooks, communications specialists and many more appeared on a mesa just west of the fire. The challenges facing the team were daunting: fighting a fire that had already engulfed almost 7000 acres, devastated one community and was threatening two others. The fire was burning on very steep slopes, fuel loads were very high, wind gusts were strong, and the weather was unseasonably hot and dry.

Yet, within days, the team managed to contain the fire. Much of the work was done by helicopters which dumped over a million gallons of water on the fire. What is perhaps most miraculous is that not a single life was lost, nor any serious injuries, neither firefighters nor residents. And from the time the team arrived, not a single home was lost.

On behalf of all of my constituents, I want to say thanks. Thanks to Supervisor Leonard Lucero and the entire Carson National Forest team for their swift response. Thanks to local volunteer fire fighting organizations, BLM, State Forestry Officials, Red Cross, the National Guard, our State Police and all the local volunteers for all working together seamlessly under great stress. Thanks to a wonderful community who pulled together to help those in need. Thanks to the Class I fire team and firefighters who came from all over the nation to help us. You are truly the best on the planet!

The Forest Service certainly receives their share of knocks from some who sometimes disagree with their decisions. But not this time. No one is knocking this agency in my district for these efforts. The men and women who helped us are nothing less than heroes. And we thank them from the bottom of our hearts. Muchas gracias a todos por su ayuda.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. MCKEON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. MCKEON address the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. FILNER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. FILNER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

ALLOCATION OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the place of the gentleman from California [Mr. FILNER].

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from West Virginia?

There was no objection.

EXPLANATION OF BUDGET PROCESS AND VOTES ON BUDGET PROPOSALS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from West Virginia [Mr. WISE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to talk a little bit about the budget process that has just passed, to put on the record the reasons I voted the way I did. I voted for the Coalition budget; I voted for the President's budget, both designed to get us to a balanced budget within a 6-year period, the same as the parameters set in the Republican leadership budget. I voted very strongly against the Republican budget.

Why did I vote for two and not the third? Well, basically the reason is, Mr. Speaker, because the first two at least recognized the importance of investment in the future for our young people, for our economic growth. Because those budgets, while they did balance in a 6-year period, the same as the Republican leadership budget, at the same time those budgets did not attempt to give tax breaks to the wealthiest individuals in this country.

The coalition budget had no tax cuts in it, recognizing that we have contradictory goals if we are trying to reduce the revenues coming in by cutting taxes and at the same time balancing the budget.

The President's budget, while it did have a tax cut in it, was a limited tax cut targeted for middle income working families and low income working families.

Neither of these budgets tried to take it out of the hide of low-income working people, such as the Republican leadership budget did, particularly because the Republican leadership budget sought to greatly reduce the earned income tax credit. That is the tax cut that was greatly expanded only 2 years ago, that gives tax relief to working families earning under \$26,000 a year.

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I was also concerned because the Republican leadership budget would cut education again, and that is a battle we had just fought. It would eliminate the Department of Commerce. If anyone can tell me why, at a time when we have got a department that is actually generating jobs, generating contracts, has brought in \$80 billion of contracts and developed a national export strategy for the first time, why we seek to eliminate it. It seems to me it is simply a matter of ideology, and that is not a satisfactory reason.