

to countless environmental advocates and others working to effect change. His work is certainly an inspiration to me.

I extend my most heartfelt wishes to Ed Wayburn for a very happy 100th birthday. Thank you, Ed, for all you have done for the protection of our natural environment.●

#### TRIBUTE TO NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

● Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I wish to commend the National Weather Service and the Billings, MT office.

This year Billings, MT, hosted the 13th national signature event commemorating the Bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery Exploration. The event at Pompeys Pillar was one of the most successful signature events in the country, and I was proud to participate in the opening ceremonies.

A great deal of preparation and partnership went into the planning surrounding those 4 days in July and the thousands of visitors expected to attend. Federal agencies stepped up to the table. Federal partnerships were key to this success. Specific concern centered on area wildfires already burning that had been started by lightning strikes from afternoon and evening storms. The National Weather Service took on major responsibility for these weather-related public safety issues.

On Saturday, July 22 and Sunday, July 23, late afternoon storms accompanied by upwards of 60-mph winds necessitated rapid evacuations of the public events at Pompeys Pillar. Efficient communication and clear direction from the National Weather Service, in coordination with the Bureau of Land Management, provided safe passage out of Pompeys Pillar in a swift and orderly fashion for the remaining public visitors, volunteers, and employees on those days.

It is apparent that the storm's effect and damage could have easily become a larger story attributed to the Pompeys Pillar signature event. That it was not is a testament to the science, technology, and public service and dedication of your agency and of your employees. Thanks to all of you for what you do for Montana. It is a job well done.●

#### CONGRATULATIONS TO SERGEANT LEIGH ANN HESTER

● Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I would like to recognize and congratulate U.S. Army SGT Leigh Ann Hester, a recent recipient of the United Service Organization's 'Service Member of the Year' Award. This honor is presented annually to one enlisted member from each branch of the Armed Forces and must be given to a soldier who demonstrates remarkable courage and skill, often risking their own lives to save the lives of others.

On March 20, 2005, Sergeant Leigh Ann Hester of the 617th Military Police Company, a National Guard unit out of Richmond, KY, was escorting a convoy of 26 supply vehicles when they were suddenly ambushed. According to military accounts of the firefight, about 40 insurgents attacked the convoy as it was traveling south of Baghdad, launching their assault from trenches alongside the road using rifles, machine guns, and rocketpropelled grenades. Despite being outnumbered five to one and coming under heavy enemy fire, Sergeant Hester led her team through the 'kill zone' and into a flanking position, where she assaulted a trench line with grenades and M203 grenade-launcher rounds.

Her quick thinking saved the lives of numerous convoy members. When the conflict ended, 27 insurgents were dead, 6 were wounded, and 1 was captured.

SGT Leigh Ann Hester is the first woman to receive the USO 'Service Member of the Year' Award and the first woman in over 60 years to receive the Silver Star—the Army's third highest award for valor in combat.

SGT Hester was only 23 years old at the time of this encounter. She was born in 1982 in Bowling Green, KY, later moved to Nashville, TN, and she joined the National Guard in April of 2001. As she continues the legacy of military service in her family—her uncle, Carl Sollinger, served honorably in Vietnam, and her grandfather, Oran Sollinger, was awarded a Bronze Star for his valor in World War II—Sergeant Hester intends to continue to serve our country by beginning a career in law enforcement.

On behalf of the people of Kentucky and the Senate, I thank SGT Leigh Ann Hester for her commitment to her country, community, and fellow soldiers. It is my honor to recognize her today for her bravery and her accomplishments. My thoughts and prayers are always with her and all the men and women who protect this Nation.●

#### RECOGNIZING SOUTH CAROLINA ORGANIZATIONS

● Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, today I wish to call attention to the good work of the Columbia, SC, Urban League and the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA. On September 11, 2006, the Columbia Urban League and the VA cohosted a training seminar for church leaders in South Carolina to help address the growing population of troubled military veterans returning from combat zones. This Veterans Ministry Workshop was led by a panel of 10 physicians from the Dorn VA Medical Center in Columbia, each of whom explained the various psychological challenges that face veterans returning from conflict. The panelists discussed methods for dealing with veterans' children and spouses while offering practical tips for church members to follow. Around 100 church leaders attended the event.

I salute the VA, the Columbia Urban League, and in particular its president,

Mr. James T. McLawhorn, for their initiative in organizing the Veterans Ministry Workshop. It was Mr. McLawhorn, a member of the VA Advisory Committee on Minority Affairs, who originally proposed the idea in response to studies released by the Journal of the American Medical Association, JAMA. Without his leadership and the cooperation of VA officials on the ground in South Carolina, the Veterans Ministry Workshop may have never happened. I am confident that the workshop will have a tremendous impact on the veteran community in South Carolina, and I hope that the Columbia Urban League and VA will build on its success.●

#### WHITE LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT

● Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that today I publicly honor and congratulate White Lake School District on achieving blue ribbon status under the Federal No Child Left Behind Act. The prestigious blue ribbon designation is based on strong test scores and a myriad of other successes.

The White Lake School District is among only 250 entities to be recognized nationwide so far this year. For public schools like White Lake to qualify for blue ribbon status, they must meet State testing levels or have a student body comprised of a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students, yet demonstrate improvement. Achieving this goal is a wonderful accomplishment, and White Lake schools ought to be applauded.

This is not the first time White Lake schools have been honored. In both the 2003–2004 and 2004–2005 school years, the district was named a Distinguished District, due to high scores on the DakotaSTEP achievement test. The U.S. Department of Education has also named White Lake as a Title I Distinguished School. In order to apply to be a blue ribbon school, the White Lake School District submitted a 27-page application outlining their strategies and techniques for learning success.

Mr. President, I am proud to have this opportunity to honor White Lake School District. It is a privilege for me to share with my colleagues the exemplary leadership and tireless commitment to education that White Lake School District provides to its students. I strongly commend the hard work and dedication that the faculty, administrators, and staff devote to White Lake schools, and I am very pleased that their hard work and the students' substantial efforts are being publicly honored and celebrated. On behalf of all South Dakotans, I would like to congratulate this extraordinary school system and wish them continued success.●

#### TRIBUTE TO BETTY J. MARTIN

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to honor