

in the White House. Mr. Rogel accepted the award and dedicated it to Weyerhaeuser's Disaster Relief Coordinator Katy Taylor, along with the partners and volunteers who attended the ceremony.

Also recognized in the White House ceremony was the North Carolina Baptist Builders, with whom Weyerhaeuser teamed up in the gulf coast relief efforts. The North Carolina Baptist Builders is a faith-based organization that set forth a large mission to rebuild 600 homes along the coast. To the credit of the Baptist Builders, the Weyerhaeuser Company recognized their "smoothly-run rebuilding operation to keep projects moving." It is this kind of forward thinking and teamwork that makes the Weyerhaeuser Company so deserving of the Ron Brown Award.

I am honored to have such a wonderful and dedicated company that operates in North Carolina in places such as Charlotte, Greensboro, Newton and many other places, including Elkin and Winston-Salem in the Fifth District. Weyerhaeuser Company has been operating in North Carolina since 1957 with approximately 3,090 employees.

The dedication of Weyerhaeuser to the community is astounding and sets a shining example to other businesses about the importance of community service and helping the less fortunate. To date nearly 300 employees and retirees from across the United States and Canada have volunteered more than 42,000 hours of their time and helped rebuild 50 homes. Weyerhaeuser has a truly generous policy of allowing employees 2 to 4 weeks paid leave to help volunteer in the rebuilding efforts of the gulf coast. Not only does it pay its employees while they are volunteering their time, but it also pays their way and their spouses' way down to the coast for the rebuilding efforts. Now, over a year later, Weyerhaeuser employees are still participating in reconstruction efforts and have contributed a combined disaster relief to date totaling more than \$2.8 million. This is nothing short of extraordinary.

While I can mention some of the accomplishments of the Weyerhaeuser Company's contributions, it is the people Weyerhaeuser has touched and the response it has received that truly shows the difference it has made not just to individuals, families and the community as a whole. As one family wrote in response to the help from Weyerhaeuser volunteers, "Because of all of your efforts, we are home! Words cannot truly express the outpouring of love we have received. We are eternally grateful to our Weyerhaeuser family." This shows how the assistance of strangers can truly

touch one's spirit, make their life better and give true meaning for caring in the community.

A sign of the high caliber of individuals Weyerhaeuser employs is some of the comments of the volunteers that went to the gulf coast to help. One man noted, "The days were long and hot, the work was intense, but the rewards were immeasurable. This has been an experience I won't soon forget." Another volunteer employee commented, "This experience was such a blessing. I got so much more from it than I felt I gave." Even Weyerhaeuser's retirees participated and one reflected of the occasion to assist those in need saying, "Having once more the opportunity to work side by side with other Weyerhaeuser employees and retirees made me realize anew why I enjoyed working for Weyerhaeuser so much. It's all about the people and the values the company ascribes to. Thanks again!"

Testimonies such as these speak volumes of Weyerhaeuser Company and its dedication to its employees and others. It goes beyond helping those who are under its employment, but it extends a helping hand to strangers to make the world a better place to live. I am pleased that Weyerhaeuser has had a long standing tradition in North Carolina and especially in the Fifth District. It is without question an admirable and outstanding company that lives up to the highest meaning of community service.

Weyerhaeuser's dedication to helping others is immeasurable and I cannot thank the company enough for the work they have done and continue to do. It is truly deserving of such a prestigious award, and I am delighted to see Weyerhaeuser's efforts have been recognized by the administration. The work of its employees and retirees shows that there is no one more deserving.

TRIBUTE TO JOE EDMISTON

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 8, 2006

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to my close friend of more than 30 years, Joe Edmiston, recipient of the Environmentalist of the Year Award at the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life of Southern California (COEJLSC)'s 7th Annual Awards Reception. COEJLSC could not have chosen a more deserving person to receive this honor.

Joe is a remarkable man whose accomplishments are legion and whose passion and commitment to the environment is unparalleled. He has literally and figuratively transformed the landscape of southern California for the better. He has also, through his infectious enthusiasm, his innovative work with professional associations and his formal academic teachings, helped change the way we think about environmental protection and stewardship. He epitomizes COEJLSC's guiding principles and his work is perfectly aligned with COEJLSC's mission and purpose.

I first met Joe in December 1976 when he interviewed for the position of executive director of the Santa Monica Mountains Comprehensive Planning Commission, a State agency created by legislation that I authored as majority leader of the California State Assembly. He was then a young member of the conservation staff of the Sierra Club, but his ideas impressed everyone and ultimately Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr., appointed him to the commission directorship.

His decision to implement the plan through the establishment of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy was an insightful—but risky—decision to forego traditional approaches. I carried the legislation, and it was a tough fight. Looking back, it was pretty audacious of Joe to think that market forces could be used to control the market, and more audacious still to think that his band of planners and ecologists would be the ones to do it. But the gamble paid off. Now, 26 years later the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy has expended close to \$550,000,000 and acquired and preserved more than 55,000 acres of park and open space lands—much of it accessible and regularly enjoyed by the urban population that surrounds it.

Serving his fifth Governor, Joe is close to being the longest serving State agency head in modern history. For a plodding bureaucrat that would not be so remarkable an accomplishment, but he is anything but that. Dynamic, sometimes controversial, he has taken the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy to the forefront of conservation leadership in California and the Nation by his innovative approaches and his impact has even been felt in other countries that are attempting to model his success.

I am proud to know Joe. He and his wife Pepper are great friends and they have a wonderful family. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Joe Edmiston and congratulating him for receiving COEJLSC's Environmentalist of the Year Award.