

Reyna had credibility and assured the Air Force he understood the need for national security, but firmly demanded the damaging flights stop. The Air Force rerouted the flights.

Governor Reyna served as police commissioner for the town of Taos, as a member of the Taos Municipal School Board, as a trustee for the Millicent Rogers Museum in El Prado, and as a tribal judge at the Santa Fe Indian Market.

In 1992, he was honored as a Santa Fe Living Treasure. The Heard Museum gave him the Spirit of the Heard Award in 2010. The chair of the advisory committee stated that Governor Reyna was selected “. . . because he dedicated his life to the betterment of Indian people and, in particular, to helping preserve the culture, resources and traditions of his tribe.” And, “[h]e is a man who has given much, but has asked for little in return.” The New Mexico Legislature proclaimed his 100th birthday, February 1, 2016, as “Tony Reyna Day.”

Governor Reyna was buried December 5, 2016, dressed in a deerskin robe and with full military honors, at the Taos Pueblo cemetery, following a mass at the pueblo’s San Geronimo Church.

War hero, husband, father, businessman, pueblo leader, community leader—Governor Reyna’s contributions to arts, culture, politics, community, and the Nation are astounding. His life demonstrates the value of service to others. He will be missed.●

TRIBUTE TO TOM M. PHELPS

● Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate Tom M. Phelps on his retirement as chief executive officer, CEO, of Plateau Telecommunications, New Mexico’s oldest telecommunications company. Tom leaves Plateau after a distinguished career of more than 20 years in my home State of New Mexico and more than 50 years in the telecommunications industry.

Plateau began as Eastern New Mexico Rural Telephone Cooperative in 1949 when a group of civic leaders, farmers, and ranchers responded to the need of rural New Mexico for affordable, reliable telephone service. The next year, the cooperative received its first Federal loan of \$581.00 to construct and operate telephone lines and facilities in Curry, De Baca, Quay, Roosevelt, and contiguous counties.

Tom joined Plateau in 1995 as assistant general manager. However, it was not long before he took the helm in 1997 as general manager. The title changed to CEO in 2001.

During his 21 years of leadership at Plateau, he has improved the quality of life for those in our rural communities through deployment of modern telecommunication services, community economic development partnerships, and participation in many local philanthropic projects, community events, and educational enterprises.

Tom oversaw the company as it grew and changed—when it first offered high

speed DSL internet service and a fiber-to-the-home program. He managed expenditure of \$116 million to install over 5,200 miles of fiber-optic cable across eastern and central New Mexico and to expand high-speed internet access to critical community institutions. This facilitated distance learning so children in rural schools can access resources that are not available in their hometowns. And it has enabled hospitals to use telehealth to improve care and provide services they can’t offer in person. Plateau’s service area now extends in 25 counties in New Mexico and western Texas, covering 25,000 square miles. Under his leadership, Plateau’s technology has been and continues to be state-of-the-art. In 2015, Plateau was the fastest home internet service provider in New Mexico.

Bringing affordable and reliable telephone service to rural areas is key to economic development. Plateau brought service to rural New Mexico when larger, national companies would not. Its investments in telecommunication services created many business opportunities in rural Eastern New Mexico, supporting and enhancing economic stability in the region.

When Plateau decided to sell its mobile wireless operations, the company anticipated having to lay off 70 employees. At that time, Tom was eligible to retire, but he stayed until he made sure his employees were taken care of. As the company transitioned, he provided early retirement for employees and made sure there were no layoffs.

Under Tom’s management, Plateau continually contributed to the communities it served. Plateau collected school supplies for local school children, provided economic development grants for new businesses, and annually gave over \$70,000 in scholarships to area high school students.

Tom has been active in many local, State, and national activities. He received the New Mexico Distinguished Public Service Award in 2014, which recognizes those who have made “unusual contributions to the public service and to the improvement of government at all levels by both government employees and private citizens.” His service as a member of the Clovis Committee of 50, Cannon Air Force Base support groups, and the Plains Regional Medical Center Board, as well as his continued support for the Clovis/Curry County Chamber of Commerce and United Way of Eastern New Mexico contributed to his selection.

Tom’s dedication, leadership, and business acumen—and personal commitment to Plateau employees and his community—have made a difference in the lives of many people across our State.

We wish him continued success and that he and his wife Candyce enjoy retirement.●

RECOGNIZING IDEA VILLAGE

● Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, the city of New Orleans has served as an eco-

nomie engine since its founding in 1718. Its location at the mouth of the Mississippi River, influential and innovative population, and unique accessibility to natural resources have allowed the Big Easy to prosper, but it wasn’t until recently that New Orleans has become a hub of new technology and entrepreneurship. A major part of that success is due to Idea Village, an independent nonprofit organization that is dedicated to driving economic growth in and around New Orleans.

In 2000, a group of New Orleans-based technology entrepreneurs came together to discuss how to spark economic growth for small businesses and entrepreneurs in the Crescent City, in order to make New Orleans the hub of entrepreneurship in the South. Allen Bell, Sally Forman, Sam Giberger, Darin McAuliffe, Michele Reynoir, Tim Williamson, and Robbie Vitranio all agreed that in order to see a lasting change, they should create a business accelerator program that partners with the local community in order to reinvest in New Orleans-based businesses. Idea Village was officially established in 2002 and immediately went to work in identifying, supporting, and retaining local entrepreneurs. That year, each founder contributed \$2,000 to the first business plan competition and successfully raised a total of \$125,000 to award to the winning business.

In 2005, Hurricane Katrina destroyed much of southeast Louisiana and parts of Mississippi. Several New Orleans businesses were damaged and closed, putting an enormous strain on the local economy. In 2006, Idea Village launched IDEAcorns in partnership with local universities, including Tulane University, to help New Orleans businesses rebuild and reopen their doors. Following the success of IDEAcorns, Idea Village since has launched over 25 initiatives to provide strategic guidance and resources to access capital to local businessowners, including IDEApitch, IDEAInstitute, among others. One of its most successful ventures is the annual New Orleans Entrepreneur Week, NOEW, a festival celebrating innovation, entrepreneurship, and new thinking and which awards thousands of dollars to several entrepreneurs through various pitch competitions and challenges. Each year NOEW engages thousands of entrepreneurs, investors, professionals, students, and community members to showcase regional startup ventures in industries important to New Orleans, including technology, water, education, energy, healthcare, and food. Going into its 10th year, NOEW has become an important part of New Orleans’ festival season.

Since its inception, Idea Village has provided direct support to more than 5,794 entrepreneurs and invested \$25 million in New Orleans businesses. Currently, entrepreneurial activity in New Orleans is 64 percent higher than the national average, and much of that success can be attributed to the efforts