

During the past century, the chamber has improved the quality of life of the people of Winchester, Frederick County and Clarke County in many important ways. In the late 1930s, it advocated for the construction of the Winchester Municipal Airport and for the completion of Route 50 from Winchester to the Shenandoah River. During 1950s, it was deeply involved in the establishment of Shenandoah University in Winchester, and in 1993, the chamber advocated for the construction of Route 37 around Winchester and even initiated a grassroots movement in 2004, to gain support for completing the road. In addition, the encouragement and support of its members has always been a priority of the Top of Virginia Regional Chamber and among the services and programs offered to its 835 current corporate members are quarterly educational seminars through Lord Fairfax Community College's Small Business Development Center, frequent Business and Breakfast and Business After Hours opportunities, various educational lunches and the activities of the Young Professionals Group.

Recently, several innovative chamber initiatives have added significantly to strengthening the social fabric of the northern valley. The Community Leadership Program is a rigorous, nine-month program that develops leaders by teaching important leadership skills and an understanding of complex community problems and their potential solutions. The Valley Business Women program helps women achieve their own personal and professional transformation. The chamber's Workforce Development Committee has partnered with local businesses and public schools to help develop the region's workforce of the future. And since 2010, with the creation of its Public Policy Committee, the chamber has become an important venue for discussions about public policy matters, including education, transportation, workforce development, regional economic development, health care, and legislation at the local, state and federal levels. Its yearly breakfast meetings with state legislators, prior to and after each General Assembly session, as well as periodic reports from the member of Congress representing the northern Valley, have been excellent opportunities for an exchange of ideas.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know of a single organization in the northern Shenandoah Valley that has done more to unify the community than does the Top of Virginia Regional Chamber, by highlighting extraordinary work that is being

done by valley residents. Each year, the Greater Good Awards dinner recognizes some of these amazingly generous individuals and the Valor Awards dinner allows the community to recognize and thank our Valley heroes for their special acts of valor and selflessness. Because the Commonwealth of Virginia has a general election each November, the chamber's Hob Nob event is often the only opportunity for chamber members and the public to hear directly from a wide variety of candidates running for office.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I ask you and our colleagues to join me in congratulating the Top of Virginia Regional Chamber for 100 years of successfully promoting the general welfare and prosperity of the people of the Northern Shenandoah Valley and to express gratitude to President and CEO Richard Kennedy, the chamber's board of directors and its great staff, as well as all those chamber CEOs, board members and staff who preceded them, for their hard work in serving the chamber's membership and in being such a powerful source of unity and enlightenment for the larger valley community.

IN HONOR OF PRINCE WILLIAM
COUNTY RED CROSS ON ITS
100TH ANNIVERSARY OF SERVICE

HON. BARBARA COMSTOCK

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, December 29, 2017

Mrs. COMSTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Prince William County Red Cross as it celebrates 100 years of service to the people of Prince William County, the City of Manassas and the City of Manassas Park. This milestone of a very special organization in Northern Virginia gives me an opportunity to celebrate the International Red Cross and Red Crescent, as well as the Prince William Chapter's national organization, the American Red Cross, founded by Clara Barton on May 21, 1881. The American Red Cross received its first Congressional Charter in 1900 and to this day it has been tasked by the federal government with providing services to members of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families as well as providing disaster relief in the United States and around the world. Inspired by the motto "Sleeves Up. Hearts Open. All In", the American Red Cross goes wherever it is

needed, from small house fires to multi-state natural disasters, guided by a policy of total impartiality as to the community or individuals to be served, so that all people can have clean water, safe shelter and hot meals—and many times, a shoulder to cry on—when this care is needed the most.

The American Red Cross is the nation's largest blood collection organization, supplying 40 percent of the blood we use. Over the last century, the Prince William Chapter of the American Red Cross has served the people of this region with essential blood services, partnering with local community and faith-based organizations to obtain lifesaving blood donations. Literally 90 percent of the disasters the Red Cross responds to are home fires and to effectively respond to them in their community, the Prince William Chapter has maintained an on-call volunteer Disaster Action team to support the first responders as well as residents who are displaced. The American Red Cross empowers people at the community level, providing emergency and health and safety training and certification classes to provide fellow Americans with the knowledge and skills they need for effective leadership in the event of an emergency. Over the long history of the Prince William chapter, it has offered First Aid/CPR/AED or Automated External Defibrillator training classes, as well as Babysitting and Childcare and Aquatics courses throughout the community. By authority of Congress, the American Red Cross has provided essential support to the members of our Armed Forces and their families and the Prince William chapter of the Red Cross has worked with military families and active duty members to help prepare them for deployments, provide care and nurturing to wounded warriors in area military hospitals, and Reconnection Workshops for military families to help them reestablish themselves as a family unit after returning from service.

Mr. Speaker, because 90 percent of Red Cross workers are volunteers, I ask you and our colleagues to join me in expressing deep gratitude for the selfless and courageous sacrifice of the volunteers of the American Red Cross, who have done so much to prevent and relieve the suffering of others, and to congratulate the wonderful volunteers and employees of the Prince William Chapter, as they celebrate the 100th Anniversary of their extraordinary service to their community.