

Kepler has run out of fuel, and will be retired in its current safe orbit, away from Earth.

"As NASA's first planet-hunting mission, Kepler has wildly exceeded all our expectations and paved the way for our exploration and search for life in the solar system and beyond," said Thomas Zurbuchen, Associate Administrator of NASA's Science Mission Directorate in Washington. "Not only did it show us how many planets could be out there, it sparked an entirely new and robust field of research that has taken the science community by storm. Its discoveries have shed a new light on our place in the universe, and illuminated the tantalizing mysteries and possibilities among the stars."

Kepler showed us the diversity of planets in our galaxy, and concluded that 20 to 50 percent of the stars visible in the night sky are likely to have small, possibly rocky planets similar in size to Earth. Many of these could possibly sustain life.

"When we started conceiving this mission 35 years ago we didn't know of a single planet outside our solar system," said the Kepler mission's founding principal investigator, William Borucki, now retired from NASA's Ames Research Center and the recipient of the 2013 United States National Academy of Sciences' Henry Draper Medal for his work with Kepler and the 2015 recipient of the Shaw Prize in Astronomy.

"Now that we know planets are everywhere, Kepler has set us on a new course that's full of promise for future generations to explore our galaxy."

Kepler's retirement doesn't mean the end of its contributions to our scientific knowledge. Future missions will build on its results and scientists will mine the data Kepler collected for years to come.

NASA's Ames Research Center in California's Silicon Valley manages the Kepler and K2 missions for NASA's Science Mission Directorate.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to represent NASA Ames and its extraordinary programs that advance our knowledge of our planet and beyond. I ask the entire House of Representatives to honor Kepler and each person and organization who contributed to its extraordinary success.

HONORING MR. JEFF STRACK WITH THE 2018 DISTINGUISHED CITIZEN AWARD

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 2, 2018

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect and admiration that I take this time to recognize the recipient of the 2018 Distinguished Citizen Award, presented annually by the Boy Scouts of America Calumet Council. To commemorate this special occasion, the organization will host a celebratory event on Wednesday, November 7, 2018, at the Center for Visual and Performing Arts in Munster, Indiana.

For 26 years, the Boy Scouts of America Calumet Council has presented the Distinguished Citizen Award to individuals whose selfless efforts have tremendously impacted their communities in Northwest Indiana and across the state. This year, the Boy Scouts of America Calumet Council will honor Mr. Jeff Strack.

In May of 2016, Jeff Strack was appointed President and Chief Executive Officer of Indiana Grocery Group/Strack & Van Til. As a third-generation head of the company, Jeff's legacy began with his fondest memories of

shadowing his father as he worked tirelessly to keep Strack & Van Til successful. After eighth grade, Jeff was officially hired into the company, eventually working his way through every department within the store before leaving for college. After obtaining his master's degree, Jeff embarked on a journey with Strack & Van Til that helped him learn every aspect of the business, rightfully earning his way to leading the company.

Almost a year after Jeff's appointment as President and Chief Executive Officer, he was faced with challenges that to many would have seemed insurmountable. In 2017, after its parent company, Central Grocers, filed for bankruptcy, Strack & Van Til was forced to shut down numerous stores. However, Jeff was determined to save the family business that has served as an economic driver in Northwest Indiana for almost six decades. After he and a group of investors formed Indiana Grocery Group and successfully purchased back Strack & Van Til, Mr. Strack vowed to keep it a family-owned business. Jeff fought for the business and for the jobs of many individuals by securing twenty locations in communities throughout Northwest Indiana. In addition, Mr. Strack's many contributions to the community have supported local schools, military, first responders, and families in need.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in commending the steadfast leadership and dedication of Mr. Jeff Strack. Mr. Strack's family business continues to serve as a cornerstone of Northwest Indiana, and their continued charitable efforts and service in our local communities are to be admired. Jeff is undeniably deserving of the 2018 Distinguished Citizen Award. His exceptional leadership and commitment to Northwest Indiana will have a positive impact on generations to come.

RECOGNIZING SARAH CARPENTER OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT

HON. PETER WELCH

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 2, 2018

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Sarah Carpenter of Burlington, Vermont for her distinguished career in affordable housing and her tireless dedication to improving the lives of Vermonters.

At the end of 2018, Sarah will retire as Executive Director of the Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA) after 20 years of leading that organization. Sarah's extraordinary career has created opportunities for thousands of Vermonters to achieve their dream of owning a home. Since its inception in 1974, VHFA's main goal has been to finance low-cost and flexible mortgages to individuals seeking affordable housing. VHFA has helped over 29,000 Vermonters and their families to purchase primary residences. Sarah leads a team of 38 employees that provides diverse and innovative services. They finance mortgages, coordinate rental housing programs, analyze housing market data, and inform state housing policy. During Sarah's tenure, the volume of VHFA mortgages provided to Vermonters grew by \$1.3 billion.

Sarah and VHFA's leadership has influence far beyond Vermont's borders. In 2000, VHFA successfully campaigned for Congress to increase the caps on the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program and private activity bonds. Additionally, she advocated for state tax credit programs that supplement the federal funds due to Vermont's dire need for a greater supply of affordable rental housing.

Sarah's contributions to the housing community began long before her time at VHFA.

From 1983 to 1998, she served as the Executive Director of Cathedral Square Corporation, an organization that has become a national model in providing service-enriched housing for older adults and people with special needs.

Sarah has also served in leadership roles on numerous boards including Leading Age, the National Council of State Housing Agencies, the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston, and Fletcher Allen Healthcare (now the University of Vermont Medical Center).

It comes as no surprise that Sarah has been the recipient of a number of awards including the Government Service Award from NeighborWorks America and the Vermont YWCA Susan B. Anthony Award for Woman of the Year.

Sarah is a native of Burlington, Vermont, and a graduate of University of Vermont and Harvard University.

We are in the midst of a housing crisis across this country. Chronic homelessness is alarmingly high, people are paying an ever-increasing portion of their paychecks on housing, and homeownership is out of reach for many. Despite the challenges, Sarah Carpenter and her colleagues throughout the state of Vermont have continued to make progress through innovative approaches and deep collaboration. Sarah has left her mark on the housing community in Vermont and the lives of many who have benefited from her good work.

Mr. Speaker, Sarah's exceptional work on behalf of Vermont communities will surely be missed, and I wish her well in her retirement.

CELEBRATING THE CAREER OF MELVIN COOPER

HON. DOUG COLLINS

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 2, 2018

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Melvin Cooper, Director of Gainesville Parks and Recreation, who is retiring after 47 years of service with the city and 30 years as its Parks Director.

In a letter to Gainesville's Parks and Recreation Board, Mr. Cooper said, "From the time I was 12 years old I knew what I wanted to do and began to set my goals for what I have done for the last 47 years. I wanted to lead change, I wanted to be change, I wanted to work with people and make a difference."

Melvin Cooper was born in Moultrie and spent most of his childhood in Commerce, Georgia. In 1970, while he was a student at the University of Georgia, he completed an internship for the Parks and Recreation Department. Mr. Cooper was first hired as a Program Coordinator and later held the role of Assistant Director for 16 years. During his tenure as Director, the Gainesville Civic Center was renovated, Lake Lanier hosted the 1996 Summer Olympics, and the Frances Meadows Aquatic Center—along with many other facilities—opened to the public.

After leading the Parks and Recreation Department for three decades, Mr. Cooper announced his retirement at a recent Board of Directors meeting. The search for a replacement will begin November 1, and Mr. Cooper will continue to serve as Director until May 31, 2019.

During his career, which has spanned almost half a century, Mr. Cooper helped improve the quality of life in our community and his contributions will benefit generations to come. I wish Mr. Cooper joyful years ahead in his retirement.