

his/her community, the county and the State of Michigan. This year, three honorees were chosen, including a Family of the Year. This year's family honoree is the Zuccaro family. Albert and Lillian Zuccaro, and their sons Dino, Alan, Rick, and Mark have established several successful business in Macomb county. Mr. Zuccaro and his sons now own and operate Café Zuccaro, Wolverine Banquet Center, Zuccaro's Country Kitchen, and Zuccaro's Holiday House.

The Zuccaro family has actively supported several worthwhile organizations in Macomb County, including the Mount Clemens Rotary Club, the Salvation Army, the Macomb County Chamber of Commerce, and the Special Olympics. They donate to homeless shelters around Macomb, as well as safe houses for abused women and children.

I am proud to join the March of Dimes in acknowledging the wonderful tradition of community service that the Zuccaro family has started and continues within Macomb County.

YUMA CROSSING NATIONAL
HERITAGE AREA

HON. ED PASTOR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 9, 1999

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, more than 60 years before the European settlement in Jamestown, Virginia and more than 80 years before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, Francisco Vasquez de Coronado marched across southeastern Arizona in search of the fabled Seven Cities of Gold. To supply Coronado's expedition, Captain Hernando de Alarcon commanded three ships through the Gulf of California into the mouth of the Colorado River.

Spanish explorer Hernando de Alarcon became the first European to venture into what is now the southwest portion of the United States just below the confluence of Colorado and Gila Rivers. There they made use of a geological formation in the Lower Colorado consisting of two massive granite outcroppings, known to us as the Yuma Crossing. Alarcon's voyage is the first European discovery of the Colorado River, and the Crossing became a natural bridge which played an important role in the western settlement of the United States.

Father Eusebio Francisco Kino mapped supply routes to California through the Yuma Crossing, a route that would be used in many expeditions and by many colonists. Using the knowledge pioneered by Father Kino, Captain Juan Bautista de Anza led more than 200 settlers and herds of livestock across the treacherous Colorado River using the Yuma Crossing. Once across, Anza traveled westward across the desert to San Gabriel then turned north and established the town of San Francisco in 1776.

Kit Carson traveled the Yuma Crossing as he carried dispatches between California and New Mexico to report on the United States' successful military conquest of California in the war with Mexico in 1846. It was during the War with Mexico that Lt. Col. Phillip St. George Cooke used the Yuma Crossing to establish the Gila Trail, a passageway used by California's gold seekers, pioneers, ranchers, farmers and military.

Yuma Crossing became a strategic military location following the Mexican War. Settlers and the Quechan Indians fought for the rights to hold ferry operations across the Colorado. In 1852, Fort Yuma was established to keep the peace between settlers and the Quechans.

In addition to its strategic military importance, Yuma became a major port town and transportation hub. Steamboats were used to freight supplies, as were stagecoach and camel caravan. But as Yuma grew, more sophisticated modes of transportation were demanded, the outgrowth of which resulted in the development of the Southern Pacific railroad. With the establishment of the Southern Pacific, Yuma established itself as a major connecting point in the westward expansion of our country.

Today, the City of Yuma has a population of 60,000 residents, and it ranks behind Phoenix and Tucson in population. Aside from its rich history, it is endowed with unique ecological resources. With its rare combination of arid desert landscape, rugged mountains and river wetlands, the natural environment of the area is fascinating. It is the uniqueness of this mix of desert, riparian and aquatic habitats that have brought the citizens of the City of Yuma and Yuma County to seek to designate Yuma Crossing as a National Heritage Area, the first to seek such a designation west of the Mississippi.

Designating Yuma Crossing as a National Heritage Area will help preserve Yuma's early heritage and highlight Yuma Crossing's importance to opening the American West to exploration and settlement. The designation will also serve to preserve and protect its vital wildlife habitats and wetlands areas. Yuma Crossing is a vital link in our nation's heritage, and it is for these reasons that I am proud to introduce legislation that proposes to designate Yuma Crossing as a National Heritage Area. I urge my colleagues to support my legislation to preserve an important part in the history of the Wild West.

VETERANS ENTREPRENEURSHIP
AND SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
ACT OF 1999

HON. JAMES M. TALENT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 9, 1999

Mr. TALENT. Mr. Speaker, over the years, the Nation has recognized the debt owed to citizens who serve in defense of our Constitution and the American ideals of free speech, personal liberty, and free enterprise. H.R. 1568 builds on the best examples of this public policy from our Nation's history. From the beginning of the Republic, when the Continental Congress provided land grants to Revolutionary War veterans, we have helped veterans with self-employment and self-sufficiency. 150 years later, the 1944 Servicemen's Readjustment Act, or "G.I. Bill of Rights of World War II" provided loan guarantees for returning World War II, and later Korean War, veterans. In the ten years following, the Federal Government provided over 280,000 small business and farm loans to veterans to help include them in the post-war boom and use their talents to propel that boom.

Unfortunately, the Nation's efforts on behalf of veterans have diminished drastically in the

intervening 45 years. Over the years, the interests of veterans, particularly the service-disabled, have fallen on infertile ground. While specifically included as a priority of the SBA at its creation, the Office of Veterans Affairs and the needs of veterans have been diminished systematically at the SBA. Elimination of the direct loan program for veterans in fiscal year 1995, at then Administrator Phil Lader's request, resulted in serious diminution of financial assistance for veterans. Total loan dollars dropped from \$22 million dollars in loans in 1993 to \$10.8 million in 1998. Likewise, training and counseling for veterans dropped from 38,775 total counseling sessions for veterans in 1993 to 29,821 sessions in 1998.

Such neglect, Mr. Speaker, would turn many people away from faith in government. However, as former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher might say, veterans are not for turning. In November 1998, the SBA Veterans' Affairs Task Force for Entrepreneurship filed its report. The Task Force examined all SBA programs, including business development, education and training, financial assistance, government contracting, and advocacy to determine ways to improve SBA's ability to assist veterans. The Task Force identified "high priority" recommendations. These included:

Legislation to allow guaranteed loans to veterans with certified service-connected disabilities or who were POWs;

A program of comprehensive outreach to assist disabled veterans, including business training and management assistance, employment and relocation counseling, and dissemination of information on veterans benefits and veterans entitlements as required by Title VII;

A company designed to address veterans' issues regarding small business; and

Regulations that include service-disabled veteran-owned businesses as a "socially and economically disadvantaged business group" to be solicited for all federal contracts and subcontracts in a documented outreach program.

The Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999 (H.R. 1568), implements the SBA Veterans' Affairs Task Force's "high priority" recommendations.

First, the Task Force recommended guaranteed loan opportunities. H.R. 1568 makes veterans eligible for funds under the microloan, DELTA Loan and State Development Company programs. For example, H.R. 1568 makes veterans eligible for assistance under the SBA's microloan program which provides small loans, i.e., under \$25,000, to people seeking initial financing for small business start-up or expansion. Furthermore, H.R. 1568 requires the Small Business Administration to establish a system for loan deferrals for small business owners called up for active duty. It also requires the SBA to make economic injury disaster loans available to self-employed individuals who are called to active duty for the National Guard and reserves. These loan opportunities enable veterans to access capital markets currently available to women, low-income, minority entrepreneurs, and other business owners possessing the capability to operate successful business concerns.

Second, the Task Force identified an outreach program to assist disabled veterans in business training and management assistance, employment and relocation counseling, and dissemination of information on veterans benefits and entitlements as a priority.