

gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) has certainly been a leader. I thank him for providing continuous leadership in education, not only in the State of North Carolina and this Nation, but now providing it here in the U.S. Congress.

As the gentleman speaks about education, the infrastructure that leads to the future, many of our schools in Edgecombe County, in fact two of them, will not be able to be used perhaps the rest of this year because they have been seriously damaged by the flood.

The infrastructure I hope that we were talking about improving our school under the modernization act will now need to be looked at in terms of FEMA providing some monies for that.

But, Mr. Speaker, I hope that, as we have opportunity to look at eastern North Carolina, that we put education as one of the infrastructure that, not only we bring back to the status quo before the flood, but that we try to improve those facilities so that the young people in eastern North Carolina, not only can survive this storm, but be prepared for the 21st Century, and that they can have the kind of facility that allows them to prepare for that future.

Also, the infrastructure has been greatly disadvantaged throughout eastern North Carolina. Some estimate that just the electricity alone will cost more than \$80 million. The water system has not yet been assessed.

So schools and other infrastructure that have been damaged by the storm need to be restored. But in education, we do not just need to restore it, we need to improve the facility.

So the gentleman is absolutely right for the bills that he had that would have improved the school must go forward, not only for people in eastern North Carolina, but for this Nation, because we need to find a way where we make sure that the equal divide, the equal opportunity that levels the playing field for the future is actual education. So we have to find for the facilities for that.

I just say educational facilities have been greatly damaged by the flood. Many of our schools have been damaged. But I know several of our schools in two counties we will not be able to restore them. I understand FEMA will come back and try to perhaps restore them. But think about the other schools that need that kind of opportunity to improve.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) is absolutely right. As we think of this whole issue of digital divide she was just talking about, the information technology is really the largest job creating engine in the history of the world. To leave a group of people behind is unacceptable, unforgivable, and criminal when we have within our power the ability to do something about it.

We can provide the facility to put it in. We can work together to make sure

every child has access to the technology. When we think about currently almost 70 percent do not have access in some ways in this digital divide, that is unacceptable as we approach the 21st Century.

The richest nation in the history of the world, we must do more, we can do more. This is inexcusable that we do not do more. I think, as a Congress, we have an obligation to make sure that we leave no one behind as we approach the 21st Century.

We need to provide scholarship for science and math and greater support for technology training. Our greatest challenge is to take educational excellence, not just into the suburbs, but to every inner city, into the rural areas as well. We need to improve education for all children in all parts of America.

We need to encourage our people to be more demanding of their government leaders so that we can get the job done. Industry needs to push harder. Not enough pressure is being put, in my opinion, in the right places to get it done.

Finally, let me conclude by saying that this Congress still has the opportunity to do something great for America's future, and we need to do it this year.

MIAMI RIVER CLEANUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUTKNECHT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, for the first time, we have been able to obtain Federal assistance for a long sought dream, the cleanup of the Miami River.

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This was included in the Fiscal Year 2000 Energy Water Appropriations bill which Congress has just passed. This is a major victory in preserving a key part of our environment, as well as allowing the Miami River to become a major contributor to international trade and economic growth. This is the beginning of a 4-year phase dredging project proposed by the Miami River Commission with the assistance of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

It provides a \$5 million initial appropriations to begin maintenance dredging of the river, which eventually will cost \$64 million from Federal, State and local sources.

This cleanup will eliminate a significant pollution threat to Biscayne Bay, which used to be one of the Nation's most pristine environments. It will also ensure the continued growth of the Miami River as one of our Nation's critical shipping links to the Caribbean and to South America.

Thanks to the tremendous bipartisan teamwork of the South Florida Congressional Delegation and a broad-based coalition of community leaders, decision interests, and officials at the

Federal, State and local levels, we have been able to achieve this goal, which is vitally important for both the future of our growing trade with our neighbors to the south and the Caribbean, as well as preserving a waterway which is a key part of our ecosystem.

We thank on behalf of the South Florida Congressional Delegation all of our colleagues this week for passing the bill in the House, for passing the bill in the Senate. It is on the President's desk, and we hope that he signs it soon to make this dream a reality for all of South Florida.

EDUCATION, THE ARTS, AND NATURAL RESOURCES IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUTKNECHT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. MCINNIS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, this evening I want to talk about a number of different subjects. I was not going to talk about education until I heard some of the previous comments, and I think it is important to clarify some of those comments that were made and talk about the direction that the Republican party is going in regards to education. Those remarks will be somewhat brief.

I then want to cover the topic that we have seen with the Brooklyn Museum in New York City. I am going to move from that subject to a subject that I think will be very uplifting to all of my colleagues, and that is the Third Congressional District of Colorado.

We are going to talk about natural resources, as we can see with this picture I have behind me. That is what that district looks like. We are going to get into much more detail about that, cover the water issues, cover the Federal land management issues, and so on. So I think it is going to be a very interesting hour. I look forward to the participation of my colleagues.

But let me begin, first of all, by talking about the preceding comments. First of all, it is important that our friends and our colleagues on both sides of the aisle from North Carolina understand that everybody across this country, 49 States across this country, are going to pitch in for that one State that got hit as devastating as North Carolina.

North Carolina, you are not alone. You are in the United States; and in the United States of America, we are a team and we stick together and we help the other States when the other States are in need of help.

I would expect the other States to help me in Colorado if we had some sort of a disaster. That is why we are the United States of America. So the preceding speaker who spoke on North Carolina, bless her. I understand the tragedies that she is going through. I do not live there, but we are willing to