

CELEBRATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF ROOSEVELT COUNTY, NEW MEXICO

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 100th anniversary of Roosevelt County, New Mexico, which was formed on February 28, 1903. The citizens of Roosevelt County this year are celebrating the many virtues of their wonderful community. Roosevelt County is a good place to call home. It has outstanding schools, safe streets, family oriented neighborhoods, civic volunteerism and community values that make it an exceptional place to live and raise a family. We have much to celebrate on this centennial.

Roosevelt County was named for the twenty-sixth President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, who enlisted New Mexican Rough Riders when he climbed San Juan Hill during the Spanish-American War. The city of Portales is the county seat. Other communities in the county include: Elida, Floyd, Dora, Causey, Arch, Kenna, Lingo, Milnesand, Pep, and Rogers. Roosevelt County is located on the high plains of eastern New Mexico in the heart of cattle country, with ranching, farming, the dairy industry, and the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Railway comprising important components of the community's economic base. Located 11 miles to the northeast of Portales is Cannon Air Force Base, which adds a very important dimension to the character of the area.

Roosevelt County was cultivated by ranching, farming, the railroad and related businesses over a hundred years ago. In 1902 a few homesteaders settled in; a year later, the homesteaders were arriving more increasingly in the area around Portales. Settlers were drawn to Roosevelt County due to the access of the railroad and the availability of shallow water. A homesteader could take a pick and shovel and dig a well of about 15 feet deep and would have plenty of water for domestic use. Most other settlers outside the Portales Valley had to haul drinking water from a few wells made by ranchers, until they could afford to drill their own. It is hard to imagine the availability of that much water now, which Roosevelt County considers its most precious natural resource.

The name "Portales" fits this charming university town even more today than when it was coined in the 1800s. Named for a nearby campsite where spring waters gushed from a series of cave-like porches across pueblo-style houses, Portales, or "Porches" in Spanish, is an entryway into New Mexico on the eastern border. Portales Springs is the most famous watering hole on the Old Fort Sumner Trail and often welcomed Billy the Kid and his partners during the infamous Lincoln County War.

Agriculture is the major industry of Roosevelt County. The leading crops are Valencia peanuts, alfalfa, cotton, wheat, corn, milo, hay, and potatoes. Valencia peanuts, noted for their sweet taste, are exported all across the United States as well as to several countries around the world. Roosevelt County is home to the only peanut butter manufacturing facility in New Mexico. Additionally, its peanut butter is currently ranked the fifth highest quality

peanut butter on the market today by Consumer Reports.

Livestock feeding and dairy farming are also important to the local economy. Other industries include soft drink canners, an ethanol production facility, grain storage and shipping, trucking and milk processing. The dairy industry is the second largest agricultural industry in New Mexico, and our state is the nation's seventh largest producer of milk.

Portales is the proud home to Eastern New Mexico University, the third largest university in the Land of Enchantment, offering over 50 undergraduate and 15 graduate majors. The university offers a broad curriculum of vocational, technical and academic disciplines and is the center of the region's cultural life. The school has brought many opportunities to graduates since 1934. In conjunction with the city, the university sponsors an annual Peanut Valley Festival that provides excitement and entertainment for the community and attracts hundreds of visitors each year. I had the opportunity earlier this week to meet with the president of the university, Dr. Steven Gamble, to receive an update on the progress the institution is making. The residents of eastern New Mexico are fortunate to have such a fine place of higher learning in their midst.

On this grand occasion, I want to express my best wishes to Portales Mayor Orlando Ortega and all the local elected officials throughout Roosevelt County that are determined to make this area an even better place to live and raise families. The elected county officials are as follows: Dennis Lopez, District 1 Commissioner; Charles Davis, District 2 Commissioner; Thomas Clark, District 3 Commissioner; Gene Creighton, District 4 Commissioner; Paul Grider, District 5 Commissioner; Nancy Gentry, Probate Judge; Tom Gossett, County Sheriff; Nancy Belcher, Treasurer; Royene Tivis, Assessor; and Joyce Lee Frazee, County Clerk. I pledge to continue to work with these leaders to promote an atmosphere in which economic development can flourish.

The signs of Roosevelt County's progress are evident. President Bush recently approved the fiscal year 2003 Omnibus Appropriations bill containing \$250,000 to continue the development of the Ute Reservoir Pipeline, which is critical for the sustained growth and water needs of this area. We have a long way to go on this project, but this funding is a crucial step forward.

Citizens have also seen fit to finance the construction of the Roosevelt General Hospital. Costing nearly nine million dollars, this facility is serving the health needs of local residents. The new Portales Junior High School was recently built to replace a decaying 75th year-old facility. A new Communications Center is being built at Eastern New Mexico University, and the local library in Portales has recently been upgraded with new technology and a more modern, usable facility. Finally, there is the new Portales Recreation Center, which will serve scores of local youth and give them a safe environment to have fun and learn. All of these improvements were financed by voters through local elections and other contributions from local neighbors.

The people of Roosevelt County have a past to be proud of, and a future that continues to unveil promising opportunities. The pull of the future is only as good as the past that empowers it, and in Roosevelt County a fine and solid history lays a well-lit path for the future.

Mr. Speaker, Roosevelt County is one of the finest regions in the State of New Mexico. This area is symbolic of traditional American values. The residents work hard, are dedicated to their families, support their schools and volunteer to help their neighbors. I ask all my colleagues to join me in wishing all its residents continued success as their community enters its second century.

CELEBRATING OUR HISTORY

HON. MIKE ROSS

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to help commemorate a month-long learning experience that all of us as Americans should join in celebrating. This month we focus on recalling and embracing a unique part of our American History and the roles of African Americans in shaping what our country is today. History teaches us that every culture and every society endures good and bad, and it is essential that we continue to learn from our past.

From slavery abolitionists like Harriett Tubman to civil rights activists like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.—even students like the Little Rock Nine who showed unimaginable courage—we have much to learn from the lives of these past and present leaders. They leave quite a mark on the pages of our history books and in the fabric of our country.

During this month, it is important that we seek to learn more about historical Black figures; it is important because it shows us what great contributions they made even during an era when many people thought Blacks had nothing to offer. Quite to the contrary—the African American community has given us some of our greatest writers, inventors, athletes, philosophers, musicians, and spiritual and community leaders during dark times in our history.

It is during this month that Rosa Parks, Frederick Douglass, Toni Morrison, and baseball great Hank Aaron celebrated their birthdays. It was during this month in 1870 that the 15th Amendment was passed, granting Blacks the right to vote. And this year, during this month, Lieutenant Colonel Michael Anderson, who was lost on the Space Shuttle *Columbia*, died as a pioneer and a living symbol of the progress African Americans have made and the successes yet to come.

Black History Month celebrates people and events that were disregarded for long periods of time. It's time we remember. It's time we make Black history our history.

NATIONAL PEACE CORPS DAY,
FEBRUARY 28, 2003

HON. JIM RAMSTAD

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate National Peace Corps Day and recognize the Peace Corps for its stellar record of achievement throughout the past five decades. The Peace Corps has become an enduring symbol of our nation's commitment to encourage progress, create opportunity and expand

development at the grass-roots level in the developing world.

Since 1961, more than 168,000 Americans responded to our nation's call to serve by becoming Peace Corps Volunteers in 136 countries. There are currently 29 volunteers from my district alone who are deployed all over the world, from Kyrgystan to Guatemala.

Mr. Speaker, Peace Corps Volunteers have made significant and lasting contributions around the world in agriculture, business development, education, health and the environment, and have dramatically improved the lives of individuals and communities around the world.

Peace Corps Volunteers have strengthened the ties of friendship and understanding between the people of the United States and those of other countries for 42 years.

President George W. Bush has issued a call to service for all Americans—both at home and abroad. The President seeks to double the number of Peace Corps Volunteers throughout the world, from the current level of 7,000 to 14,000 volunteers in FY07.

Mr. Speaker, Peace Corps Volunteers, enriched by their experiences overseas, have brought their communities throughout the United States a deeper understanding of other cultures and traditions, thereby bringing a domestic dividend to our nation.

National Peace Corps Day recognizes the work of returned Peace Corps Volunteers as they bring their experiences to work, school, places of worship and recreation, sharing with colleagues, friends and community members how their volunteer service changed and shaped their lives.

Mr. Speaker, National Peace Corps Day honors its Volunteers, past and present, and reaffirms our country's commitment to helping people help themselves throughout the world. I would like to congratulate them for the tremendous, and far too often thankless, work they do to improve the human condition.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION
MAKING AERIAL FIREFIGHTERS
ELIGIBLE FOR FEDERAL DEATH
BENEFITS

HON. BARBARA CUBIN

OF WYOMING

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mrs. CUBIN. Mr. Speaker, in April 1997, John Hirth of Buffalo, Wyoming, and his copilot lost their lives when their air tanker crashed near Blandburg, Pennsylvania. They were on a firefighting mission for a government agency, the Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry.

At the time, John was making an aerial scouting of the fire, referred to as a dry run. Fire conditions were gusty, and turbulent wind patterns resulted from the fire itself.

Immediately after dropping the fire retardant, their tanker encountered smoke which affected visibility.

Just as the air tanker flew out of the smoke, its right wing hit an oak tree which stood above the tree line. The aircraft rolled 90 degrees left and flew into the mountainside a quarter mile from the initial tree strike, exploding on impact and instantly killing John and his copilot.

In the mid-1990s, John tried to obtain life insurance through various agencies. He was turned down due to his occupation as an aerial firefighter.

At the time of his death, the business still had to meet payments on the 1997 fire contract operation (which included liability insurance, contract-paid pilots, fuel, oil, parts, etc.), as well as on a second tanker and one sprayer aircraft.

The financial loss from this crash was so devastating that his wife, Connie, did not have the money to pay for her husband's funeral.

While this is heartbreaking to us, it is a very stark reality that many families face when aerial firefighters are lost in the line of duty. There were seven fatalities last year alone involving air tankers and fire suppression helicopters.

The fact is that the vast majority of those pilots lost were serving under a government contract at the time. They were providing aerial fire suppression services for the government when they lost their lives.

My reason for being here today is to correct a provision in law that is blatantly unfair.

I am introducing legislation that will provide some financial security to aerial firefighters and their families.

This legislation recognizes all pilots and crew involved in aerial fire suppression as public safety officers. In doing so, the bill makes these deserving individuals eligible for death benefits under the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program, also known as PSOB.

Under current law, aerial firefighters who are under contract with the government are not afforded these benefits simply because they work for private companies that contract with the government.

However, without these contract pilots and crew, the federal government would not have the capabilities to deal with wild land fires.

This legislation is a matter of common sense. Aerial firefighters are public safety officers in every sense of the word. With dedication and enthusiasm, they protect our natural resources, our communities, and often our very lives.

Every day, when our men and women in the Armed Forces go out to do their job, they say to us, "I am willing to risk my life for you today." Our local police officers say it as well and, yes my friends, so too do aerial firefighters.

John Hirth was the primary wage earner in his air tanker business and his family. If PSOB had been available to them at the time of John's death, the financial hardships endured by his wife could have been minimized.

It is time we start giving back to aerial firefighters because, if we don't, we will be losing a valuable resource. With no aerial firefighters to protect our natural resources, where will we turn?

I don't think any of us want to face that question, so let's make sure we don't. Please support this legislation. It is the right thing to do.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
PROTECTION AMENDMENT

HON. FRANK D. LUCAS

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. LUCAS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, today, I reintroduced the bill that I introduced

last Congress in response to the absurd ruling made by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals which declared school recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance unconstitutional. Immediately upon hearing of this atrocious decision in June of last year, I began drafting my bill, the "Pledge of Allegiance Protection Amendment," which would amend the U.S. Constitution to protect the right of schools to lead willing students in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Speaker, I believe children in schools across America should start their day the same way we do here in Congress, by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

The court decision has set a dangerous precedent that we cannot allow to continue nationwide. I know of no better way to educate our children about the beliefs we stand for in this great country of ours than with the Pledge of Allegiance. The Pledge is an important way of educating our children about the value of patriotism and democracy and a reminder that we are one nation, under God. That is why I believe we need to keep the Pledge in our schools and keep judges who don't value the Pledge out of our courts.

As it stands now, a temporary stay has been placed on the effect of the ruling until the full panel of the Ninth Circuit reviews the case. I would prefer not to have to amend the Constitution unless it is absolutely necessary to do so, and it is my hope that the courts will overturn this ridiculous ruling. However, if they do not, then I have my bill ready to go to protect the Pledge of Allegiance in our schools.

Mr. Speaker, I urge your support of this bill and yield back the remainder of my time.

A SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO MARTHA
MOORE ON THE OCCASION OF
HER 35TH ANNIVERSARY AS
OHIO REPUBLICAN PARTY VICE
CHAIRMAN AND OHIO COM-
MITTEEWOMAN TO THE REPUB-
LICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE

HON. PAUL E. GILLMOR

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. GILLMOR. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to pay special tribute to an outstanding lady from Ohio. Martha Moore was born in Cambridge, Ohio, located in Guernsey County. The daughter of former 15 District Congressman C. Ellis Moore, she was raised in the tradition of commitment to one's family, faith in God, and responsible public service.

Miss Moore attended Wellesley College and received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Muskingum College. She earned her Master of Arts from The Ohio State University. While serving as a professor in the Department of Communications at Muskingum College, she helped to shape the lives of generations of students through her thoughtful tutelage. In 1986, Miss Moore was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award from Muskingum College and was also inducted into the Guernsey County Hall of Fame.

Miss Moore was first elected to the Ohio Republican State Central and Executive Committee in 1950, and currently serves as committeewoman from the 30th Senate District in