

Rabbit Hash General Store has withstood ice jams and floods from the Ohio River. The establishment shows the true fortitude of the people who live in this great river town.

The Rabbit Hash General Store has been recognized as a landmark by the Commonwealth of Kentucky since the late 1970s. Nationally, the Rabbit Hash General Store was recognized by the Department of the Interior on the National Register of Historic Places, and the town of Rabbit Hash has been recently honored by First Lady Laura Bush as a Preserve America Community.

I ask my fellow colleagues to join me in congratulating the Rabbit Hash General Store on its 175th anniversary. The Rabbit Hash General Store is a true American treasure.●

#### TRIBUTE TO BRAYTON WILLIS

● Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, in early 2007, the Army Corps of Engineers will see one of its finest employees retire after 28 years of exemplary service to individuals, communities, and agencies that the Corps serves.

Brayton Willis has lived in Idaho since 1999, serving as the project manager in the Walla Walla District's Boise office. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps and later graduated from Northwestern University with a degree in civil engineering. His career began in Massachusetts where he worked on one of the first environmental impact statements required under the Clean Air Act.

Brayton has worked for the Corps of Engineers in Arizona, Washington and South Carolina, in addition to his work in Idaho. Over the course of his career, he worked at two of the Nation's nuclear facilities providing environmental restoration support to the Department of Energy. He found time to use his expertise in a volunteer capacity as well, helping local communities in California and Puerto Rico assess damages after natural disasters. In Idaho, in particular, Brayton specialized in flood control and issues related to environmental improvement in urban and suburban flood-prone areas. He also worked with local communities to address the critical issues of water and wastewater management and actively sought to involve community stakeholders in flood control and environmental improvement. Brayton preferred to approach flooding and its implications in a preventive manner, before disaster happened. He worked under the firm belief that this method was the most effective and efficient use of taxpayer dollars.

Brayton's work reflects the complementary ideals of caring for communities and the environment. Increased population growth in the West means greater and more sensitive interface between the environment and people. If managed effectively and proactively, the result can be positive for the environment and hold far less risk of dis-

aster for the residential population. Brayton understands this and implemented it in his almost three decades of employment in the Corps. I congratulate Brayton Willis on his retirement and wish him and his wife Debbie well in future endeavors.●

#### A FRIEND TO IDAHO FISH AND GAME

● Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, on January 1, Idaho sportsmen and women and wildlife will lose a great agency friend in the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Steve Huffaker, 22-year veteran of Fish and Game, and director since 2002, will be retiring after a full and successful career with this important agency.

Steve has been my great friend and supporter on many issues including wolves, elk, slick spot peppergrass, sage grouse, and cooperative conservation agreements with landowners. His enthusiasm for the Collaboration for the Recovery of the Endangered Species Act and the Owyhee Initiative has been instrumental as I seek the support of others on these important land management policy initiatives. Steve also provided expert advice and recommendations with regard to Federal implementation of these initiatives. He served as an invaluable resource for considerations of wildlife habitat in designations in several State and Federal conservation programs. Steve has been a staunch supporter of my Elk Collaborative; he has worked closely with my staff on these and many other issues over the years. He led the charge to delist grizzly bears, restored confidence and trust with agricultural interests, and remained determined to keep me informed of his activities, ideas, and beliefs. Steve's strengths include a positive demeanor and clear and tough but fair and reasonable stance when he was called upon to defend his position and decisions.

During his years at Fish and Game, Steve served as both Fisheries Bureau chief and Wildlife Bureau chief. He oversaw the agency during a time of constant and frequent change. State management of wolves, fee increases, access issues, conservation, and troubled agency relationships with sportspeople, farmers, and ranchers were some of the challenges that Steve met head-on, and today Idaho is better off with his years of leadership. Now, he will have the time to privately enjoy the fields, streams, and mountains of Idaho that he took such good care of over the years. The man who will be "taking his grandkids fishing" will be sorely missed, and his boots, hard to fill. I wish Steve health, success, and successful hunting and fishing, in his well-deserved retirement.●

#### MISSISSIPPI HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, SAUK RAPIDS, MINNESOTA

● Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, today I honor Mississippi Heights Elementary

School, in Sauk Rapids, MN, which will soon earn an Award for Excellence in Education for its exceptional and innovative achievements in educating children.

Mississippi Heights Elementary School is truly a model of educational success. The school begins each school day by welcoming all staff and pupils in the gym with a unique "Lift Off" program, which is led by the children and is designed to recognize birthdays, make announcements, and strengthen the school's strong sense of community. Another special characteristic of Lift Off is its buddy system, which matches each child in the primary classes with a buddy from the intermediate classes to act as a mentor. The buddies sit together at Lift Off and read to each other before the program begins.

Mississippi Heights is dedicated to a successful literacy initiative, whose goals are: implementation of a balanced literacy program that will include independent shared, guided reading, writing, and read-alouds throughout the day; students' demonstration of individual improvement in reading levels; reading and writing throughout the day which aims toward raising RIGBY and Guided Reading levels for each student; and daily reading aloud by teachers, with 5,000 read-aloud books as a building goal.

Teachers at Mississippi Heights have made reading and writing a top priority, and it shows in their enthusiasm and passion in the classroom. The students' reading and writing scores have improved: More than 30 percent of the students scored in the top level of the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment in 2006, and the school earned four stars from the Minnesota Department of Education in reading this year.

Much of the credit for Mississippi Heights Elementary School's success belongs to its principal, Jean Clark, and the dedicated teachers. The children and staff at Mississippi Heights Elementary School understand that in order to be successful a school must go beyond achieving academic success; it must also provide a nurturing environment where children can develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for success throughout life. All of the faculty, staff, and pupils at Mississippi Heights Elementary School should be very proud of their accomplishments.

I congratulate Mississippi Heights Elementary School in Sauk Rapids for winning the Award for Excellence in Education and for its exceptional contributions to education in Minnesota.●

#### NEVIS PUBLIC SCHOOL, NEVIS, MINNESOTA

● Mr. DAYTON. Mr. President, today I honor Nevis Public School, in Nevis, MN, which will soon receive an Award for Excellence in Education for its exceptional and innovative achievements in educating children.

Nevis Public School is truly a model of educational success. It is a unique