

Achievement Award is presented to young farmers and ranchers across the United States who demonstrate knowledge and achievement in agriculture, as well as a steadfast strength and goal of promoting the agricultural community. With the average age of American farmers increasing steadily as the years go by, it is refreshing to see a young couple like the Mahans embrace the financial and labor-intensive plight that is common in the field of agriculture.

The Mahans own 523 acres of a 2,000-acre farm near their home in Lexington, KY. With the changing needs facing farmers, they quickly learned to diversify their production options and create alternatives for income. Currently, the Mahans produce burley tobacco, beef cattle, wheat, soybeans, corn, and alfalfa. This forward-thinking approach to the ever-changing agriculture market is a clear reason this couple experiences continued success in their farming career.

I congratulate John and Jill Mahan on this prestigious award from the American Farm Bureau. By winning this national award, they have shown the rest of the Nation the strength of the agricultural community in Kentucky along with their personal dedication to their remarkable careers in farming. They are true examples of Kentucky at its finest. ●

#### MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:09 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 390. An act to require the establishment of a national database in the National Archives to preserve records of servitude, emancipation, and post-Civil War reconstruction and to provide grants to State and local entities to establish similar local databases.

The message also announced that pursuant to 15 U.S.C. 1024(a), and the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Speaker appoints the following Member of the House of Representatives to the Joint Economic Committee: Mr. SAXTON of New Jersey.

At 2:15 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 41. Concurrent resolution providing for a conditional adjournment of the House of Representatives.

The message further announced that the House agrees to the amendment of the Senate to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 38) providing for a joint session of Congress to receive a message from the President.

REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE UNION DELIVERED TO A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS ON JANUARY 23, 2007—PM 2

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was ordered to lie on the table:

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Thank you very much. Tonight, I have a high privilege and distinct honor of my own—as the first President to begin the State of the Union message with these words: Madam Speaker.

In his day, the late Congressman Thomas D'Alesandro, Jr., from Baltimore, Maryland, saw Presidents Roosevelt and Truman at this rostrum. But nothing could compare with the sight of his only daughter, Nancy, presiding tonight as Speaker of the House of Representatives. Congratulations.

Two members of the House and Senate are not with us tonight—and we pray for the recovery and speedy return of Senator Tim Johnson and Congressman Charlie Norwood.

Madam Speaker, Vice President Cheney, Members of Congress, distinguished guests, and fellow citizens:

This rite of custom brings us together at a defining hour—when decisions are hard and courage is tested. We enter the year 2007 with large endeavors underway, and others that are ours to begin. In all of this, much is asked of us. We must have the will to face difficult challenges and determined enemies—and the wisdom to face them together.

Some in this Chamber are new to the House and Senate—and I congratulate the Democratic majority. Congress has changed, but our responsibilities have not. Each of us is guided by our own convictions—and to these we must stay faithful. Yet we are all held to the same standards, and called to serve the same good purposes: To extend this Nation's prosperity . . . to spend the people's money wisely . . . to solve problems, not leave them to future generations . . . to guard America against all evil, and to keep faith with those we have sent forth to defend us.

We are not the first to come here with government divided and uncertainty in the air. Like many before us, we can work through our differences and achieve big things for the American people. Our citizens don't much care which side of the aisle we sit on—as long as we are willing to cross that aisle when there is work to be done. Our job is to make life better for our fellow Americans, and help them to build a future of hope and opportunity—and this is the business before us tonight.

A future of hope and opportunity begins with a growing economy—and that is what we have. We are now in the 41st month of uninterrupted job growth—in a recovery that has created 7.2 million

new jobs . . . so far. Unemployment is low, inflation is low, and wages are rising. This economy is on the move—and our job is to keep it that way, not with more government but with more enterprise.

Next week, I will deliver a full report on the state of our economy. Tonight, I want to discuss three economic reforms that deserve to be priorities for this Congress.

First, we must balance the Federal budget. We can do so without raising taxes. What we need to do is impose spending discipline in Washington, D.C. We set a goal of cutting the deficit in half by 2009—and met that goal 3 years ahead of schedule. Now let us take the next step. In the coming weeks, I will submit a budget that eliminates the Federal deficit within the next 5 years. I ask you to make the same commitment. Together, we can restrain the spending appetite of the Federal Government, and balance the Federal budget.

Next, there is the matter of earmarks. These special interest items are often slipped into bills at the last hour—when not even C-SPAN is watching. In 2005 alone, the number of earmarks grew to over 13,000 and totaled nearly \$18 billion. Even worse, over 90 percent of earmarks never make it to the floor of the House and Senate—they are dropped into Committee reports that are not even part of the bill that arrives on my desk. You did not vote them into law. I did not sign them into law. Yet they are treated as if they have the force of law. The time has come to end this practice. So let us work together to reform the budget process . . . expose every earmark to the light of day and to a vote in Congress, and cut the number and cost of earmarks at least in half by the end of this session.

Finally, to keep this economy strong we must take on the challenge of entitlements. Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid are commitments of conscience—and so it is our duty to keep them permanently sound. Yet we are failing in that duty—and this failure will one day leave our children with three bad options: huge tax increases, huge deficits, or huge and immediate cuts in benefits. Everyone in this Chamber knows this to be true—yet somehow we have not found it in ourselves to act. So let us work together and do it now. With enough good sense and good will, you and I can fix Medicare and Medicaid—and save Social Security.

Spreading opportunity and hope in America also requires public schools that give children the knowledge and character they need in life. Five years ago, we rose above partisan differences to pass the No Child Left Behind Act—preserving local control, raising standards in public schools, and holding those schools accountable for results. And because we acted, students are performing better in reading and math, and minority students are closing the achievement gap.