

CONGRATULATIONS TO INDEPENDENCE RENEWABLE ENERGY CORPORATION FOR BEGINNING PRODUCTION IN ALABAMA

**HON. JO BONNER**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 23, 2007*

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to recognize Independence Renewable Energy Corporation on the occasion of the opening of its Alabama biodiesel plant. After breaking ground in October 2006, Independence Renewable Energy Corporation produced its first gallon of biodiesel earlier this month.

From this first trickle of biodiesel, the plant is in the process of increasing its capacities and will soon boost production to 40 million gallons a year by May 2007, making it not only the largest producer in the State, but the largest producer in the Southeast.

Located in the town of Claiborne, in Monroe County, this plant currently converts soybean oil into biodiesel fuel, although its design flexibility provides for the use of alternative feedstocks. Independence Renewable Energy Corporation will use more than 27 million bushels of soybeans a year, which is nearly 1 million acres worth of soybeans.

The plant currently employs seven and will employ ten when at full operation in May. These 10 jobs will support up to an additional 150 jobs in agriculture, as well as an estimated 100 jobs in transportation and petroleum blending industries. The biodiesel plant is expected to generate annual revenue of \$120 million by distributing fuel to markets in Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Georgia, and Louisiana.

This new facility is not only important for the economic impact that it will have on the State and region, but also for leading the way in the development of alternative fuels that are less harmful to the environment, while reducing our dependence on foreign oils and gas. Biodiesel, when blended with conventional fuels, reduces greenhouse gas and toxic emissions associated with petroleum derived diesel. This facility will benefit not only the people of Alabama but the entire Nation.

I ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing Independence Renewable Energy Corporation. The people of Claiborne—and Monroe County—are extremely proud to be part of the solution to our Nation's energy crisis.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO KUUMBA HOUSE DANCE THEATRE FOR ITS 25 YEARS OF ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE

**HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 23, 2007*

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a Houston cultural treasure, the Kuumba House Dance Theatre. For 25 years of artistic excellence, the Kuumba House has been dedicated to ensuring that African dance forms thrive and grow both artistically and professionally in the city of

Houston as well as throughout Texas and the United States.

It has been said that the mind may know the steps, but only the spirit can dance. Dance is a transcendent expression of mind, body, and soul intertwined that when executed, captivates its audience and pulls them into its resplendent world of free flowing and creative aesthetics. The Kuumba House Dance Theatre has been enthralling its audiences with its high-energy, high-octane performances for the past 25 years in Houston, Texas.

The Kuumba Dance Theatre reflects its name well, which means "creativity" in Swahili. Through the art form of African dance, the body is allowed to creatively express and reflect the mood of its dancer while bending, jumping, and undulating gracefully to the rhythm and beat of the African drum. African dance reflects the rich culture and joy of the African people, and I applaud Kuumba House for having achieved international recognition by bringing African dance to Houston and the world.

Madam Speaker, we need to encourage creativity in this day and age, especially in our youth. For over two decades, the Kuumba House Dance Theatre has worked diligently in Houston and all over the U.S. to facilitate quality dance education and performances as well as promoting understanding of African cultural art forms and creative expression. I commend Kuumba House for not only teaching this beautiful cultural art form to our youth, but for also hosting educational activities, concerts, and community outreach events to all audiences that support and appreciate the beautiful art form of dance.

On behalf of the constituents of the 18th Congressional district of Texas, I commend this group on their faithful service to the Houston community and join them in the celebration of their 25th Anniversary. I am honored and humbled to be Co-Chairing Kuumba House's March 23rd, 25th Anniversary Gala Dinner with Global Energy Limited CEO Mr. Kenneth Yellowe.

The gala will feature such dignitaries as featured speaker Dr. Barbara Masekela, who has been a devoted member of the African National Congress for over three decades and is currently the South African Ambassador to the United States. An African luminary and personal friend who will be presented with the "Legend of Africa" award is NBA superstar and humanitarian Dikembe Mutombo. I am proud to say that I was more than glad to assist Dikembe who through his foundation has donated \$15 million to construct and open the Biamba Marie Mutombo Hospital and Research Center, a \$29 million, 300-bed hospital in Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In conclusion, the Kuumba House Dance Theatre would not be where it is today without the steadfast dedication of its Founder and Artistic Director, Lindi Yeni. I thank Lindi for her vision, hard work, and wholehearted commitment to Kuumba House and in this evening's auspicious gala. Once again, I pay tribute to the Kuumba House Dance Theatre and look forward to many more decades of thrilling and creative dance performances, which contribute to the rich diversity of our community.

TRIBUTE TO CHRISTOPHER WAYNE MULLER FOR THE AWARD OF EAGLE SCOUT

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 23, 2007*

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Christopher Muller, a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 397, and by earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Christopher has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the years Christopher has been involved in Scouting, he has earned 32 merit badges and held numerous leadership positions, serving as Troop Librarian, Patrol Leader, and Troop Guide. Christopher has earned numerous awards such as the Top Gun Award for being the best shooter in the Explorer Post and the H. Roe Bartle Heritage Award. Christopher is currently a Brave in the tribe of Mic-O-Say. His tribal name is "He Who Walks Like Thunder."

For his Eagle Scout project, Christopher painted fire hydrants for the city of Kearney, Missouri.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending Christopher Muller for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

CONGRATULATING AIRINC/FOKKER SERVICE IN FAIRHOPE, ALABAMA, ON RECEIVING THE 2007 GOVERNOR'S TRADE EXCELLENCE AWARD

**HON. JO BONNER**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, March 23, 2007*

Mr. BONNER. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor AIRINC/Fokker Services located in Fairhope, Alabama, for winning the State of Alabama's Governor's Trade Excellence Award.

Two years ago, Alabama Governor Bob Riley established the Governor's Trade Excellence Award to honor businesses of all sizes—from all regions of the State of Alabama—for their excellence in exports. The goals of the award are to identify Alabama businesses making significant contributions to the export business and to promote Alabama exporters as role models and supporters to the Alabama business community, while encouraging businesses to become involved in the global marketplace. The award also aims to increase awareness of the impact of exporting on Alabama's economy.

The eight winners of the award are chosen by a panel from the Export Alabama Trade Alliance who judge the businesses on a wide range of criteria. Criteria include the level of export sales as a proportion of total sales and innovations in exporting. I am proud to announce that two out of the eight winners of the Governor's Trade Excellence award are located in Alabama's First Congressional District.