

The district also received two fire safety grants totaling \$41,765 to update the fire detection system, install heat and smoke detectors and provide new wiring in the building.

Excellent schools do not just pop up like mushrooms after a rain. They are the product of vision, leadership, persistence, and a tremendous amount of collaboration among local officials and concerned citizens. I salute the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Elk Horn-Kimballton Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—Tom Cannon, Doug Parker, Mark Smith, Tamie Fahn and Kevin Petersen and former board members Don Christoffersen, Tom Wall, Mike Howard and Lori Robertson. I would also like to recognize superintendent Casey Berlau and former superintendent Alan Hjelle.

As we mark the 10th anniversary of the Harkin school grant program in Iowa, I am obliged to point out that many thousands of school buildings and facilities across the United States are in dire need of renovation or replacement. In my State of Iowa alone, according to a recent study, some 79 percent of public schools need to be upgraded or repaired. The harsh reality is that the average age of school buildings in the United States is nearly 50 years.

Too often, our children visit ultra-modern shopping malls and gleaming sports arenas on weekends, but during the week go to school in rundown or antiquated facilities. This sends exactly the wrong message to our young people about our priorities. We have to do better.

That is why I am deeply grateful to the professionals and parents in the Elk Horn-Kimballton Community School District. There is no question that a quality public education for every child is a top priority in that community. I salute them, and wish them a very successful new school year.●

#### KNOXVILLE COMMUNITY EDUCATION

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, in Iowa and across the United States, a new school year has begun. As you know, Iowa public schools have an excellent reputation nationwide, and Iowa students' test scores are among the highest in the Nation.

I would like to take just a few minutes today to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Knoxville Community School District and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the program of Harkin grants for Iowa public schools.

Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools or renovating existing facilities. In many cases, this Federal funding is used to leverage public and/or private local funding, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect in a local school district.

The Knoxville Community School District received several Harkin fire safety grants totaling \$172,000. The district installed fire and smoke alarm systems, and upgraded electrical wiring, smoke detection, and warning systems throughout the district. The Federal grants have made it possible for the district to provide quality and safe schools for their students.

Excellent schools do not just pop up like mushrooms after a rain. They are the product of vision, leadership, persistence, and a tremendous amount of collaboration among local officials and concerned citizens. I salute the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Knoxville Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education Jeff Wallace, Tim McDonald, Dennis Goad, Mike Husted, and Leslie Miller, and former board members Mike Helle and Scott Chambers. I would also like to recognize superintendent Randy Flack and director of maintenance Jeff Sinnard.

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#### MASON CITY COMMUNITY EDUCATION

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, in Iowa and across the United States, a new school year has begun. As you know, Iowa public schools have an excellent reputation nationwide, and Iowa stu-

dents' test scores are among the highest in the Nation.

I would like to take just a few minutes today to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Mason City Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the Harkin grants for Iowa public schools. Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools or renovating existing facilities. In many cases, this Federal funding is used to leverage public and/or private local funding, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect in a local school district.

The Mason City Community School District received a 2002 Harkin grant totaling \$522,000 which it used to help to renovate science classrooms at Mason City High School. The district also received four fire safety grants totaling \$181,262 for safety improvements throughout the district. The Federal grants have made it possible for the district to provide quality and safe schools for their students.

Excellent schools do not just pop up like mushrooms after a rain. They are the product of vision, leadership, persistence, and a tremendous amount of collaboration among local officials and concerned citizens. I salute the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Mason City Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—Timothy Becker, Mark Young, Gary Hoffman, Michele Applegate, Darshini Jayawardena, Robert Thoms and Paula Recinos and former board members Jim Spicer, Janet Isaacson, Richard Hudson, Dr. Samuel Hunt, Jean Marinos and Nancy Gilman. I would also like to recognize superintendent Dr. Anita Micich, former superintendent Keith Sersland, buildings and grounds supervisor Todd Huff, former building and grounds supervisor Don O'Connor, finance director Ramona Jeffrey, former finance director James Scharff, high school principal Douglas Kennedy and former high school principal Joyce Judas.

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#### MEDIAPOLIS COMMUNITY EDUCATION

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, in Iowa and across the United States, a new school year has begun. As you know, Iowa public schools have an excellent reputation nationwide, and Iowa students' test scores are among the highest in the Nation.

I would like to take just a few minutes today to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Mediapolis Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the program of Harkin grants for Iowa public schools. Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools or renovating existing facilities. In many cases, this Federal funding is used to leverage public and/or private local funding, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect in a local school district.

The Mediapolis Community School District received several Harkin fire safety grants totaling \$150,000 which it used for improvements to the fire safety system including fire exits, smoke and heat detectors, and emergency lighting at several district buildings and to replace a section of the roof at the high school and to repair and replace deteriorating plaster in the middle school gymnasium. The Federal grants have made it possible for the district to provide quality and safe schools for their students.

Excellent schools do not just pop up like mushrooms after a rain. They are the product of vision, leadership, persistence, and a tremendous amount of collaboration among local officials and concerned citizens. I salute superintendent Frederick Whipple, former

superintendent Bill Newman, the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Mediapolis Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—president Sandy Hedges, vice president Kenton Klenk, Michael Brown, Ralph Kaufman, Toby Gordon, Dawn Dunnegan and David Baker and former members Kim Hull, Jack Bell, Sherry Spence, Kathryn Whisler, Richard Pfeiff, Melodee Kennedy, Julie Edwards and the late Terry Miller.

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#### SOUTHEAST POLK COMMUNITY EDUCATION

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, in Iowa and across the United States, a new school year has begun. As you know, Iowa public schools have an excellent reputation nationwide, and Iowa students' test scores are among the highest in the Nation.

I would like to take just a few minutes today to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Southeast Polk Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the program of Harkin grants for Iowa public schools. Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts, everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools or renovating existing facilities. In many cases, this Federal funding is used to leverage public and/or

private local funding, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect in a local school district.

The Southeast Polk Community School District received several Harkin grants totaling \$2,486,943 which it used to help modernize and make safety improvements throughout the district. The district received four construction grants totaling \$2,108,922 to help build a new school in Runnells, to help provide additional classrooms at Mitchellville, Delaware, and Centennial schools and to help build Clay Elementary in Altoona. The additional classrooms and new schools are needed to address rapid growth of students in the district. This school is a modern, state-of-the-art facility that befits the educational ambitions and excellence of this school district. Indeed, it is the kind of school facility that every child in America deserves. The district also received four fire safety grants totaling \$377,951 to make safety improvements throughout the district.

Excellent schools do not just pop up like mushrooms after a rain. They are the product of vision, leadership, persistence, and a tremendous amount of collaboration among local officials and concerned citizens. I salute the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Southeast Polk Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education president Brad Skinner, vice president Steve Hanson, Katie Temple, Andrew McGrean, Tom Hadden, Joanne Moeller, and Lori Slings, and former board members Pat Staggs VanderWert, Doug Workman, Gwen Seward Lewis, Jack Scignoli, Richard Owens, Valarie Campbell, Doug Keast, and Marion Vande Wall. I would also like to recognize superintendent Thomas Downs, former superintendent Dr. Joseph Drips, associate superintendent Dr. Stephen Miller, business manager Mike Hamilton, director of support services Dan Janssen and the cochairpersons Tom Hadden and Melissa Horton and volunteers for the "It's For the Kids" campaign which worked to pass the bond referendum.

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