

that when my father, Congressman Walter B. Jones, Sr., passed away, Sgt. Cooper (Ret.) paid him the great respect of placing one of the medals he had earned on my father's casket. I will always remember this meaningful gesture and kind display of appreciation for my father's service.

Unfortunately, Sgt. Cooper's (Ret.) service on behalf of our nation left him with symptoms of Gulf War Syndrome; he suffers from multiple sclerosis as well as serious immune disorders. Due to these illnesses, he is now confined to a wheelchair. Since he returned from combat, Cooper has been a tireless advocate for his fellow veterans. He has lobbied the North Carolina General Assembly for a special license plate honoring Gulf War veterans and has become an outspoken supporter of rights for the disabled.

Sgt. Cooper (Ret.) deserves to be commended not only for his service to our nation and his fellow veterans, but also for the acts of heroism he has demonstrated within his own family. When his young son Aaron was run over by a garbage truck two years ago, he used his medic skills to save his son's life, though Aaron still lost most of his right arm and has undergone several surgeries since. Cooper has served as a role model to his children, as his daughter Windy has followed her father's example by signing up for medical lab technician training with the Army National Guard.

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to offer my congratulations to the family of Sgt. Jeff Cooper (Ret.), a special person whose service to his nation and fellow veterans has made him well-deserving of this new home and special honor.

ON THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE ALEXANDRIA TRANSIT COM-
PANY'S (ATC) OPERATION OF
THE CITY'S DASH BUS SYSTEM

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 9, 2009

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker I rise today to recognize the 25th Anniversary of the Alexandria Transit Company's (ATC) Operation of the City's DASH Bus System. DASH stands for Driving Alexandrians Safely Home.

Back during the early 1980s, Alexandria Mayor Charles "Chuck" Beatley had a vision

of a local bus system that would serve the transit needs of the Alexandria community and provide high quality transit service for its residents, workers, and visitors.

Mayor Beatley could have done no better than to name Mr. William B. "Bill" Hurd as the first chairman of the Alexandria Transit Company. In Mr. Hurd, Mayor Beatley found not only a person who shared his vision of a new transit service, but also a supremely competent administrator who worked tirelessly for the next 22 years to create and sustain the DASH service. During his tenure as chairman, he delivered safe and reliable service with clean buses and friendly, courteous drivers.

Today, ATC is recognized nationally and throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia for the service it provides and has won many outstanding achievement awards over the years, including the American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) System Safety Award for five consecutive years, the APTA Public Transportation System Outstanding Achievement Award, the Governor's Transportation Safety Award, the APTA first place AdWheels Marketing Award for innovative and creative marketing efforts for four years, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT) Outstanding Urban Public Transportation System Award, the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT) Innovative Program Award for six years, and the Virginia Transit Association (VTA) Outstanding Public Transportation Marketing Award for the "Dash About" service and "DASHing Around Alexandria" campaign. ATC was also recognized three years in a row by the Alexandria community as one of the top five city services for quality.

Today DASH continues to provide clean, safe, affordable and reliable service every day to thousands of commuters, city residents, and visitors, but it has also grown to meet the needs of a growing city and the changing times. Over the past 25 years ridership has grown by more than 330 percent. Annual ridership has eclipsed four million. Fourteen thousand people ride DASH everyday and 10,000 ride on weekends. Service has grown from 582,000 service miles in the first full year of service in 1985 to more than 1.5 million service miles today.

Alexandria has many amenities as a charming, livable community; its historic homes and gardens, its street side restaurants and shops, the Potomac waterfront and its engaged, civic-minded citizenry. DASH contributes to Alexan-

dria's high quality of life by preserving the city's livability, mitigating traffic, improving circulation and mobility throughout the City, and providing easier access to local businesses, retail and employment centers, residential developments, and the regional Metrorail and the Virginia Railway Express commuter rail systems.

And as we begin to focus on the environmental challenges of air pollution and global warming, DASH has a key roll to play in promoting a less carbon intense alternative to the automobile. To demonstrate its commitment to a greener, eco-friendly city, the new DASH building under construction will be a LEED Certified Silver building.

I salute ATC and DASH for twenty-five years of superb service. I also salute its employees and the Board of Directors, for their contributions and efforts to improve public transportation service throughout the City, for their achievements that have been recognized both nationally and by the Commonwealth of Virginia, and in providing the highest quality of service to Alexandria.

I wish them a successful future.

HONORING DEREK JAMES
STRICKLAND

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 9, 2009

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Derek James Strickland 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 357, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

Derek has been very active with his troop participating in many scout activities. Over the many years Derek has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

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