

knowing that Gary's heroism and memory will outlive the record of the words here spoken.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of Gary Lee Woods, Jr. in the RECORD of the Senate for his service to this country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy and peace. I pray that Gary's family can find comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah who said, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

May God grant strength and peace to those who mourn, and may God be with all of you, as I know He is with Gary.

WILDFIRE IN NORTH MYRTLE BEACH, SC

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, our hearts go out to the people of North Myrtle Beach, SC, today. As you may know, North Myrtle Beach firefighters, along with firefighters from around South Carolina, are battling the worst wildfire to hit that area since 1976.

While the cause of the fire is unknown at this point, high winds have fanned the flames resulting in a total damage of nearly 15,000 acres—23 square miles. My understanding is that officials on the scene estimate that the wildfire is about 75 to 80 percent contained at this point which is good news. Ninety firefighters from eight different departments from across South Carolina are currently battling this blaze.

It is at times like these when you really appreciate the hard work that our firefighters do on our behalf. You also appreciate the dangers. I understand that last night, two of our South Carolina firefighters had to deploy their emergency fire shelters when they became surrounded by flames. Both, I am told, are unhurt.

At this point, no injuries or fatalities have been reported and we should be very thankful for that. However, many have lost their homes. Seventy homes have been destroyed with another 29 severely damaged. I expect that that number, unfortunately, will likely go up. Anyone who has ever lost a home to a fire understands the sense of terrible loss—the loss of the house they grew up in and the loss of irreplaceable family heirlooms.

I want to thank North Myrtle Beach Mayor Marilyn Hatley, the Governor, his emergency management team, the Forestry Commission, the State Fire Marshall, the State national guard, the officials of Horry County, the South Carolina Red Cross, and the others who are pitching in right now to put out this fire. My understanding is that the Red Cross has shelters open in North Myrtle Beach and is housing several hundred people tonight.

I want to applaud our firefighters for always standing ready to answer the call to action. I pray that they accomplish their mission soon and come home safely to their families. And I pray for the families who have suffered devastating losses.

STATE OF THE INDIAN NATION

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, Montana has a long history with its first citizens, the Native American Indian people that comprise my State's eight tribes. Montana's history with our tribes, like those at the Federal level, has fluctuated greatly over the years. At first treatment was shameful, characterized by war and violence. After the wars, the Federal Government engaged in neglect, by placing Indians on remote reservations and trying to forget about them. At long last, we have moved to the more progressive and enlightened policy of today—self-determination. This shift has been a long time in coming, but it is critical. Under this new policy, we appreciate tribes as sovereign units of government and work with them in that capacity to become self-sufficient through self-determination.

One of the good things Montana does on a biennial basis is ask an elected tribal chairman to address a joint session of the Montana Legislature and present a State of the Indian Nations speech. On March 10, 2009, James Steele, Jr., who is both chairman of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation and, the recently elected Chairman of the Montana-Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council, addressed my former colleagues in the legislature. I found his speech to be a thoughtful call for cooperation in addressing the current economic problems we face. It was also a fascinating description of the history of State/tribal relations. I think my colleagues in Congress will appreciate, and learn from it. I therefore ask unanimous consent to have Chairman Steele's speech printed in today's RECORD.

There being no objection the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Good afternoon.

Thank you House Speaker Bob Bergren.

Thank you Senate President Robert Story.

Thank you also to Margaret Campbell, a Fort Peck Tribal member and the first Indian House Majority Floor Leader.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in this distinguished chamber and for the opportunity to speak to the leaders of Montana, who have gathered here for this State of the Tribal Nations address.

I also thank the Montana National Guard that presented the colors. You have served our Nation well in putting yourself in harms way and you continue to serve through your community service. As United States Senators John McCain and Dan Inouye—themselves both war heroes have often pointed out—American Indians have a proud tradition of serving in the military in the highest percentage of any ethnic group in the United States. We ask our Creator for Godspeed for all Americans that serve this great country in places far away and pray for their families who also make tremendous sacrifices for the freedoms we have.

May I ask Bruce Sun Child from the Chipewa Cree Tribe to lead us in a prayer.

(Sun Child speaks in the Cree language.)

Thank you Bruce for your words of prayer.

I am pleased to introduce the Tribal Government leaders that have joined us today.

(Identifies tribal leaders by name)

Tribal leaders, I am honored to represent you today, as Chairman of the Montana-Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council and as Chairman of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

Honorable Governor Brian Schweitzer and Lieutenant Governor John Bohlinger, thank you. Throughout your administration, you have opened the front doors of the Capitol to the Tribes and we have walked through those doors many times. We look forward to continuing our government-to-government relationship throughout the next four years.

I thank the distinguished members of the Senate and House of Representatives and in particular, the American Indian legislators of Montana:

Representative Shannon Augare, House Majority Whip

Representative Tony Belcourt

Representative Frosty Calf Boss Ribs

Representative Carolyn Pease-Lopez

Representative David Roundstone

Senator Carol Juneau

Senator Sharon Stewart-Peregoy, and Senator Jonathan Windy Boy

We look to you for leadership and guidance as the legislative session continues.

I would also like to recognize the state-wide elected officials in attendance today Superintendent of Public Instruction, Denise Juneau, the first Indian woman to be elected to state-wide public office; Attorney General Steve Bullock; Secretary of State Linda McCulloch and State Auditor Monica Lindeen.

There are members of the Governor's cabinet present today, as well as representatives from the offices of Senator Baucus, Senator Tester, and Representative Rehberg.

I would especially like to thank and honor today Mr. Gilbert Horn, Sr. an Assiniboine of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, who, like the more storied Navajos, used the Assiniboine language with Gerald Red Elk of the Ft. Peck reservation to create a code our enemies in World War II were never able to break. At one point in the war Gilbert Horn successfully attacked a Japanese machine gun post and despite finding his uniform riddled with machine gun bullets managed to survive unscathed. He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor but this humble man felt like he didn't deserve special recognition because he was only doing his job. Thank you Gilbert Horn for your service to this country.

Thank you all.

Elected leaders, tribal elders, ladies and gentlemen: On behalf of the Tribal Nations across the State of Montana, I am honored to present the State of the Tribal Nations address. My name is James Steele, Jr., and I am the Chairman of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and the Chairman of the Montana-Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council.

We live in times of tremendous change, politically and economically. We have seen history made in the election of President Barack Obama and his appointments of the most diverse cabinet in the history of the nation.

And we have also lost a great leader. This past month, Crow Tribal Chairman Carl Venne passed away—a tremendous loss for the Crow Nation, Montana, and the Country. Carl was a former Chairman of the Montana-Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council and gave this address during the 2007 legislative session. Please let us honor the passing of this great leader, this great man, and my friend, with a moment of silence.

The Charles M. Russell painting that dominates this Chamber serves as a reminder of the historic relationship between the Tribes and those who came west to this great country. Charlie Russell recognized that the coming of Lewis and Clark had a profound impact on the Indian people, as our way of life