

group, said that in 2013 utilities signed “a record number of power purchase agreements and what ended up being historically low prices.”

Especially in the interior region of the country, from North Dakota down to Texas, where wind energy is particularly robust, utilities were able to lock in long contracts at 2.1 cents a kilowatt-hour, on average, she said. That is down from prices closer to 5 cents five years ago.

“We’re finding that in certain regions with certain wind projects that these are competing or coming in below the cost of even existing generation sources,” she said.

Both industries have managed to bring down costs through a combination of new technologies and approaches to financing and operations. Still, the industries are not ready to give up on their government supports just yet.

Already, solar executives are looking to extend a 30 percent federal tax credit that is set to fall to 10 percent at the end of 2016. Wind professionals are seeking renewal of a production tax credit that Congress has allowed to lapse and then reinstated several times over the last few decades.

Senator Ron Wyden, the Oregon Democrat, who for now leads the Finance Committee, held a hearing in September over the issue, hoping to push a process to make the tax treatment of all energy forms more consistent.

“Congress has developed a familiar pattern of passing temporary extensions of those incentives, shaking hands and heading home,” he said at the hearing. “But short-term extensions cannot put renewables on the same footing as the other energy sources in America’s competitive marketplace.”

Where that effort will go now is anybody’s guess, though, with Republicans in control of both houses starting in January.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DONNELLY). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the previous order be modified so the votes originally scheduled for 3 p.m. tomorrow now occur at 5:30 p.m. and that the time following the 10 a.m. cloture votes and 5:30 p.m. be equally divided in the usual form; further, that notwithstanding rule XXII, following the vote on cloture on Calendar No. 555, the Senate proceed to vote on cloture on the nomination of Calendar No. 660; that if cloture is invoked on either nomination, the time under cloture run consecutively in the order in which cloture was invoked, with all other provisions of the previous order remaining in effect.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING JEFF E. CAUDILL

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the life of Mr. Jeff E. Caudill—a veteran and tireless public servant who passed away last month at the age of 84.

Jeff was born in a log cabin in Viper, KY, on January 20, 1930. In order to help support himself and his family, he began work in the coal mines with his father and brothers at the age of 14.

Without a formal education past the seventh grade, Jeff decided to join the U.S. Army, where he proudly served his country for 22 years throughout both the Korean and Vietnam wars.

After his retirement from the military, Jeff moved back to Kentucky where he continued his service to the community in other ways. Throughout London, KY, he is known as “Santa Jeff.” Jeff was afforded this nickname in part because his white beard gave him the ability to play the part during the Christmas season, but also because he could be counted on to serve his community in all seasons.

Jeff was known to organize clothing and food drives, make hospital visits to the sick and elderly, and captain the Honor Guard at military funerals. Whatever he could do to better the lives of others, you could count on Jeff to deliver.

Jeff Caudill’s life of service to his country, community, and family set a shining example for us all to follow. Therefore, I ask that my U.S. Senate colleagues join me in honoring this exemplary citizen.

The London-area publication the Sentinel-Echo recently published an article detailing the life of Mr. Caudill. I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Sentinel-Echo, Nov. 17, 2014]

REMEMBERING JEFF

(By Nita Johnson)

One of the founding members of the Laurel-London Optimist Club and “Santa Jeff” died suddenly at his home Friday morning.

Jeff Caudill, best known for his efforts in founding the local Optimist Club and for his many years of portraying Santa Claus in the annual Christmas parade, had ongoing health problems. In recent years, he had suffered two strokes and a heart attack as well as kidney failure. His wife Shirley said Caudill had breakfast Friday morning and was planning his usual daily activities when he had “a massive heart attack” that ended his life.

Caudill, 84, was instrumental in establishing the Laurel-London Optimist Club. For many years, he hosted a Halloween party at his home, giving away bicycles and cooking for children of all ages—the predecessor of the current Optimist Club Halloween party held each year. He served as president of the local organization several times including twice as the Honor Club and again as vice president. He served as Lt. Governor for the Kentucky-West Virginia region and was named Optimist of the Year both locally and throughout the district. He was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2008 for his years of dedicated service to the Optimist Club.

Caudill was also known throughout the community as “Santa Jeff”, posing with children at Walmart for yearly Christmas pictures. He was hand-picked by former London-Laurel County Chamber of Commerce executive director Randy Smith to portray Santa Claus in the Christmas parade—a job that Caudill thrived on each year. One year, however, Caudill was hospitalized and was on life support and could not fulfill his Santa duties.

“The day of the parade, he had big tears running down his face,” his wife said. “That’s the only Christmas parade he ever missed, once even putting on his Santa suit 10 days after having surgery.”

In fact, Caudill had just had his Santa suit dry cleaned in preparation for this year’s Christmas parade. His bag was already half-full of candy canes that he always gave out to children.

“He was one of 16 children. They didn’t have Christmas,” Shirley said. “He didn’t get candy or clothes or toys. That’s why he worked so hard to make sure other children had a Christmas.”

Caudill spent 22 years in the U.S. Army, 14 of which were overseas. He served in Korea in 1947 before going to Japan a year later. He was wounded during a battle but continued to serve his country, moving his family to various military posts across the world. After discharge, Caudill was considered 100 percent disabled, but he continued to honor military heroes through the Disabled American Veterans organization where he served on the Color Guard and participated in military funeral tributes.

Funeral arrangements for Jeff Caudill were pending at London Funeral Home at press time Friday. Burial will be held at Camp Nelson in Jessamine County. The family asks that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the Jeff Caudill Optimist Scholarship fund to assist local students in their college costs.

REMEMBERING SALVATORE FERRARA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, Chicago lost its Candy Man on Thanksgiving Day. Salvatore Ferrara II passed away in Oak Brook, IL. He was the third generation of the Ferrara family who has given us memories, cavities, and the treats that lit up kids for generations.

Simply listing their iconic candies takes you back in time: Original Boston Baked Beans at the Saturday movies, Red Hots after a sandlot game, Lemonheads at the swimming pool, and Atomic Fireballs on a dare. A handful of Ferrara candy was like a handful of happiness.

Ferrara Pan Candy Company was started in 1908 in Chicago by Mr. Ferrara’s grandfather, the original Salvatore Ferraro. Its first candy was