trip, especially given high gas prices and the lengthy distances some veterans must travel.

The State of South Dakota is home to almost 77,000 veterans—approximately 10 percent of the State’s population. Today gasoline averages $2.97 per gallon. In rural States such as South Dakota, many veterans must travel more than 120 miles each way in order to reach a veterans hospital. South Dakotans living in Selby and Gettysburg must travel as much as 170 miles. With the price of gas rising, the fixed mileage reimbursement leaves these veterans behind.

Oil companies are reaping substantial profits without reinvesting these profits in the infrastructure that helps keep gasoline markets operating smoothly. I am deeply concerned that these profits are being spent in profits while at the same time receiving tax cuts and incentives. On the opposite end of the spectrum, veterans are forced to make tough choices in order to afford driving to the VA for treatment. For many and women who defended our Nation should not have to choose between buying groceries and visiting a doctor at the VA.

For over 30 years, mileage reimbursement rates for veterans have remained stagnant, whereas Federal employees received an 8-cent increase for a similar travel program in September 2005. Currently, Federal employees are reimbursed 44.5 cents per mile when using a private vehicle for official Government business. We owe our Nation’s veterans the same benefit.

President Bush has consistently supported VA budgets that short change veterans health care by billions of dollars. Unfortunately, under current law, money to reimburse veterans for travel is allocated from the same accounts used to provide medical care. This bill changes the funding formula and would mandate a separate allowance to reimburse travel costs. This will reduce the competition between programs that are equally meritorious and necessary but are forced to compete for the same pot of funds.

Mr. President, I encourage my colleagues to support the Emergency Energy Assistance for Disabled Veterans Act. It is time we’re being fair and reasonable in profits while at the same time receiving tax cuts and incentives. On the opposite end of the spectrum, veterans are forced to make tough choices in order to afford driving to the VA for treatment. For many and women who defended our Nation should not have to choose between buying groceries and visiting a doctor at the VA.

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the distinction of being the first non-partisan, independent coalition of national housing leaders from both public and private sectors. The pioneers and the advocacy group included bankers, builders, civic leaders, realtors, organized labor, architects, and residents. Early on, NHC was instrumental in the efforts to raise public awareness in New York City about the plight of hundreds of thousands of its people and the consequences slums had on the general welfare.

In 1945, NHC moved its headquarters to Washington, DC, and took on a tremendous challenge: get rid of the slums, and eliminate substandard housing. Through the 1940s NHC forged partnerships and mobilized grassroots forces around the country in an effort to pass Federal legislation to meet this challenge. Their efforts were rewarded with the passage of the landmark Housing Act of 1949, the most sweeping, ambitious housing legislation the Nation had ever had. The Act called for “a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.”

In the 1960s, NHC was again instrumental in the passage of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965, which resulted in the creation of a Cabinet-level department devoted to housing.

Throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s NHC was a constant presence in the national debate on housing policy, and continued to advocate on behalf of better housing opportunities for all Americans.

NHC continues to be a force in shaping this Nation’s housing policy. Today, as NHC celebrates this milestone, it has redefined itself to a central mission: fulfilling the dream of the 1949 Housing Act—a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.” I commend the National Housing Conference for its past efforts and honor the organization on this very special anniversary.

COAST GUARD CUTTER “ACACIA”.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, today at a 10 a.m. the U.S. Coast Guard will decommission the Cutter Acacia in a ceremony in Charlevoix, MI.

The Acacia’s keel was laid in 1942 in Duluth MN, and was commissioned on September 1, 1944. The cutter is named after the original Acacia, a U.S. Lightship Service vessel sunk off the coast of British West Indies by a German U-boat on March 17, 1942. The Acacia is the last of the Coast Guard’s 180-foot World War II era buoy tenders still in service and has called Charlevoix, MI, home since 1996.

The Acacia has served as a buoy tender on the Great Lakes for 62 years and its area of responsibility extends from Chicago at the south end of Lake Michigan to Alpena on Lake Huron. The cutter’s primary mission is maintaining aids to navigation but has also performed search and rescue missions, as well as providing ice-breaking assistance during the winter. The Acacia, also known as “The Big A” or “Ace of the Great Lakes” has performed an unheralded but vital mission in the Great Lakes for more than six decades.

I commend the Acacia crew both past and present for their tireless service to maintain the Great Lakes navigational aids. Each fall the Acacia and its crew begin a race against the Lakes brutal winter weather when they set out to remove buoys in Lake Michigan and Lake Huron. These buoys can weigh over 18 tons and are covered in ice. Pulling buoys out of the frigid and unpredictable Great Lakes in October, November and December is back breaking work in rough seas and sub zero weather. House Bill to keep these waterways open for commercial shipping as long as possible before the ice closes the shipping lanes and grinds any buoys left behind into scrap metal.

Mr. President, the Acacia and her crew have helped the Great Lakes faithfully since the 1940s and we will miss her fondly.

PROCLAMATION

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I request unanimous consent that the following proclamation honoring the Bicentennial of the Steubenville Herald-Star newspaper be printed in the RECORD.

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

PROCLAMATION HONORING THE BICENTENNIAL OF THE STEUBENVILLE HERALD-STAR NEWSPAPER

Whereas; The Herald-Star Newspaper was founded on June 7, 1806 in Steubenville by William Lowry, who named it the Western Herald, and

Whereas; It is the oldest newspaper in Jefferson County and is also one of the oldest daily circulated newspapers in Ohio, and

Whereas; John Miller left the paper to fight the British during the War of 1812, where he received lands in Missouri, and earned the rank of Colonel—eventually becoming the territorial governor, and

Whereas; President Woodrow Wilson’s grandfather, James Wilson bought the Western Herald in 1815. The newspaper played in the Wilson family for nearly three decades, and

Whereas; With the establishment of a telegraph between Steubenville and Pittsburgh, the Western Herald became one of the most widely read and influential papers in the area, and

Whereas; The Western Herald once employed journalists who went on to become powerful players in the newspaper industry, like R.B. Allison, who left Steubenville to become the territorial governor, and

Whereas; The Western Herald and the Steubenville Star merged in 1897 to become the Herald-Star, and

Whereas; The Herald-Star is now operated by Ogden Newspapers Inc, and now resides at 401 Herald Square in downtown Steubenville.

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Whereas; The Herald-Star is now operated by Ogden Newspapers Inc, and now resides at 401 Herald Square in downtown Steubenville.

Now, therefore, I, Mike DeWine, United States Senator from the Great State of Ohio, would like to commend The Herald-Star for two centuries of commitment to one of this country’s founding ideals—the freedom of the press—and congratulate past, present and future employees for their success.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

COLBRAN JOB CORPS

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, today I recognize and commend the fantastic award and award at the International Robotics Competition demonstrates that Colbran is meeting and excelling above and beyond this mission statement: “Believe, Achieve, and Succeed.” Their first place victory at the Denver regional competition and excellent showing and award at the International Robotics Competition demonstrates that Colbran is meeting and excelling above and beyond this mission statement.

Colbran Job Corps students are well known throughout western Colorado for their achievements and commitment to the betterment of their community. They have actively participated and supported the Colorado Special Olympics for almost 20 years.

Recently, the students and staff at the Colbran Job Corps Center collaborated to form a robotics team that competed in national competitions against other robotics teams from universities, colleges, and the private sector. In May, Colbran team was awarded 1st place honors in a regional robotics competition in Denver and won an opportunity to compete in the International Robotics Competition in Atlanta against robotics teams from around the globe. The judges at the international competition in Atlanta awarded Colbran the Engineering Inspiration Award for their ability to inspire other competitors.

The students and staff at the Colbran Job Corps certainly live up to their mission statement: “Believe, Achieve, and Succeed.” Their first place victory at the Denver regional competition and excellent showing and award at the International Robotics Competition demonstrates that Colbran is meeting and excelling above and beyond this mission statement.