

state-of-the-art plastics technology for jobs in Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Illinois, thanks to a \$514,550 U.S. Department of Labor grant.

Collaborators on the grant, U.S. Rep. Mark Souder, R-Ind., Steve Corona of JobWorks Inc., Harry Adamson, Plastics Technology Center director, and Craig Adolph of the Cole Foundation, made the announcement at the Plastics Technology Center Monday.

The grant was requested in January and awarded Friday, Adolph said. A curriculum and courses may be in place as soon as this summer or fall to train workers on specific machinery allowing some to step into jobs earning them \$40,000 a year, he said.

The training is available to workers in the Indiana counties of Noble and DeKalb, as well as Steuben, Souder said. It also is open to Williams County, Ohio, and Branch, Hillsdale and St. Joseph counties of Michigan.

The training will be free, as the grant will pick up the cost, Adamson said. To date, he has hired no project manager, although the coordinating process with other workplaces has begun.

In opening comments, Souder characterized Steuben County as a spot on the cusp of becoming an industrial magnet due to job training, exceptional schools, natural beauty, recreational options and advantageous transportation routes.

"This is clearly a hot zone for Indiana," he said. "The rolling hills, the interstate structure, the lakes. . . That's why we work to get money for the airport expansion, a bypass around Angola, the bike path. . . It all makes a positive ambiance for industrial recruitment, and in the middle of it you have a technology center."

He praised Angola High School's advanced use of technology, its partnership with Tri-State University and its school-to-workplace program and emphasized those assets work together to train and keep a available work force in Steuben County.

"The Plastics Technology Center can help Angola High School reach out," he said. "The companies ultimately with this grant can help meet the increasing demands for mid-tech workers and keep them here. This is for people in high school who recognize everyone will not go to college. We're retraining the work force. This will help northeast Indiana further along the path for an enhanced quality of life."

Corona credited the interaction between Adolph and Adamson, the facility itself, the coordination with work force systems in the tri-state area and the training curriculum for the nod on the grant.

"We expect to serve 1,000 people over the next 24 month period. . . Research shows around 100 plastics plants in Michigan and Indiana (alone)," he said.

"That's what higher education in the U.S. and Indiana is about," Adolph said. "We're going to keep our students here. We are out in front, and with these people's help, we're going to stay there."

Adamson said the center will help Steuben County compete in a global environment. Training for students, incumbent and dislocated workers will mean higher productivity, said the 30-year veteran of the plastics industry.

Adamson led those assembled on a tour of the center, including a visit to the computer lab, where students learn industrial software packages in the center's Cisco Academy. "Here students are trained on the simulation models, individually, at their own speed," he said.

He also showed off the actual plastics machinery upon which students will train, calling it "the latest, the highest" in technology. The machinery and lab were donated by companies on six-month leases, and com-

puters procured through a \$50,000 U.S. Department of Agriculture grant written by Adolph.

"We're looking at concrete, bottom-line dollars here," Adamson said. "These people will be trained—you don't need to call a more skilled person."

Souder spoke to the environmental issues and impact attendant upon courting industry and plastics plants while touting the area's unspoiled natural beauty.

"First off, why are companies moving toward plastics?" he queried. "Because they want cleaner air, and people want higher gas mileage, which lighter, plastic parts (can give). As we move toward more biodegradable plastics, the manufacturing impact is less, as opposed to steel mills. Plastics also have some of the cleaner software jobs because we'll have applied sciences. . . I know this is a sensitive issue in a lakes area. Plastics isn't the cleanest (industry), but it's among them," he said. He pointed to University of Notre Dame research developing reduced air pollution techniques in relation to plastics manufacturing.

Adolph indicated plastics may be the tip of the iceberg in recruiting business to the area.

"With training and with Tri-State as a partner, we . . . should be able to attract other technology-based industries as well," he said. "This building can be enhanced, so plastics is just the first large manufacturer."

WE CANNOT HAVE A FREE SOCIETY WITHOUT PRIVATE PROPERTY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, John A. Rapanos owned a 175-acre tract of land a few miles west of Bay City, Michigan. He cut some timber, removed the stumps, and brought in a considerable quantity of sand as fill.

Now, this was on his own private property. However, the Michigan State government ruled that 29 acres contained wetlands, and a federal permit should have been obtained first. Mr. Rapanos was indicted, convicted, and the judge reluctantly imposed a \$185,000 fine, put him on probation for 3 years, and required 200 hours of community service.

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Then a few months ago, the 6th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals reversed the judge, because incredibly they said he had given Mr. Rapanos too lenient a sentence.

Mr. Speaker, when something like this can take place, I wonder if we really live in a free country any more. The judge whom the 6th Circuit unbelievably found to be too lenient said at one point, "I don't know if it's just a coincidence that I just sentenced Mr. Gonzales, a person selling dope on the streets of the United States. He is an illegal person here. He's not an American citizen. He has a prior criminal record. So here we have a person who comes to the United States and commits crimes of selling dope, and the government asks me to put him in prison for 10 months. And then we have an

American citizen who buys land, pays for it with his own money, and he moves some sand from one end to the other and the government wants me to give him 63 months in prison."

And the judge said, "Now, if that isn't our system gone crazy, I don't know what is. And I am not going to do it."

Of course, he was reversed. This story was told in a recent column by nationally syndicated columnist James J. Kilpatrick entitled, "Wetlands Case Shows Government Run Amok."

Mr. Speaker, we can never satisfy government's appetite for money or land. If we gave every Department or agency up here twice what they are getting, they might be happy for a short time; but they would very soon be back to us crying about a shortfall of funds.

Now, the Federal Government owns slightly over 30 percent of the land in this country and State and local governments and quasigovernmental entities own another 20 percent, half the land in some type of public ownership; but they always want more.

And the two most disturbing things are, one, the rapid rate at which government has increased its taking in the last 30 years or 40 years; and, two, the growing number of restrictions, rules, regulations, and red tape the government is applying to the land that is left in private hands.

And some very left-wing environmental extremists are even promoting something called the Wildlands Project with the goal of taking half the land that is left in private hands and making it public. No one seems to get concerned until it is their land that is being taken or their home.

Talk about urban sprawl, if you feel overcrowded now, wait until the government takes half the private land that is left.

Already, there is so little private land that is still developable in many areas that builders are forced to build houses on postage-stamp size lots.

Fairfax County, Virginia, recently had a man placed in jail for about 3 months because he had the audacity to put a golf driving range on his own land in competition with a county government driving range.

He even spent huge money, I believe it was over \$100,000, placing trees and complying with all sorts of ridiculous requirements; but when they told him he was going to have to spend many more thousands more to move trees they had ordered him to put in in the first place and basically undo what they ordered him to do, he fought back.

I ask again, Mr. Speaker, is this still a free country?

The Nobel Prize winning economist Milton Friedman said, "You cannot have a free society without private property."

Linda Bowles, a national syndicated columnist, a few days ago in a column entitled, "Endangered Species versus Farmers," wrote this, "In his 1992 best

seller, 'The Way Things Ought To Be,' Rush Limbaugh wrote, 'With the collapse of Marxism, environmentalism has become the new refuge of socialist thinking. The environment is a great way to advance a political agenda that favors central planning and an intrusive government. What better way to control someone's property than to subordinate one's private property rights to environmental concerns.'"

Ms. Bowles said at the time, this sounded like hyperbole, but it was not. Limbaugh's warning was worthy and prophetic. I realized this a few years ago when I came across a story concerning a farmer in Kern County, California, who was arrested for allegedly running over an endangered kangaroo rat while tilling his own land. His tractor was seized and held for 4 months, and he faced a year in jail and a \$200,000 fine.

As time has passed, it is now clear, Ms. Bowles said, what happened to the farmer in Kern County was not an anomaly, but part of a developing pattern of government invasion of private rights.

On April 7, 2001, the federal government's Bureau of Reclamation cut off irrigation water to 1,500 family farms in the Klamath Basin on the Oregon-California border. Based on "citizen lawsuits" filed by environmental activists, all the available water will go to save fish, primarily the sucker fish. A federal judge denied an appeal by the farmers saying, "Congress has spoken in the plainest of words, making it abundantly clear that the balance has been struck in favor of affording endangered species the highest of priorities."

While the farmers are going bankrupt, the legal bills of the environmentalists are paid for by the American taxpayers under the "citizen lawsuit" provisions of the Endangered Species Act.

Mr. Speaker if we don't soon start putting people and private property before sucker fish and kangaroo rats, it is us who will be the suckers and we will lose our freedom and prosperity.

Meanwhile, based on a successful lawsuit filed by the Earth Justice Legal Defense Fund, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has just designated 4.1 million acres as critical habitats for the endangered California red-legged frog. Nearly 70 percent of the acres are private property.

The protected habitats hopscotch across 28 California counties, including key agricultural counties, adding layers of new regulations on already over-regulated private land. No activity of any kind on this land will be permitted until it has been proven that such activity will in no way affect the well-being of the beloved red-legged frog.

Another endangered critter wreaking damage in California is the fairy shrimp, which thrives in what environmentalists call "vernal pools" and what ordinary folk call standing water or mud puddles. Anyway, when these puddles evaporate, the fairy shrimp eggs nest in the mud until the next seasonal rains hatch them.

Apparently the deal is this: if you drain or spray standing water, you get an award from the mosquito control people and a summons from the fairy shrimp police.

The protection of these "vernal pools" is a nightmare to California farmers, developers, and even local governments. For example, environmental concerns for the shrimp cost Fresno County a six-month, \$250,000 delay in the construction of an important freeway. However, that's cheap compared to the undisclosed cost of moving the site of a major new University of California campus in Merced, Calif., because there are too many vernal pools on it.

California is the nation's largest producer of food crops and commodities, including fruits, nuts, vegetables, melons, livestock and dairy products. This massive agricultural industry depends entirely on irrigation for water. In California, rainfall is slight or non-existent from early May to mid-October.

Land regulations, fuel costs and electrical shortages are disastrous to farmers. But the most critical issue for them and for all Californians is water. The eco-inspired ban on the construction of dams and water storage facilities to catch the runoff from winter rains and spring snow melts is limiting the supply of water even as demand for it is surging. It is a disaster in the making. *Deja vu!*

While there is local outrage in California and elsewhere over these abuses, there is little national outrage. One hopes this is due to a lack of coverage by the mainstream media, rather than a fatalistic American submission to state socialism. One fears that only in retrospect, when it is too late to resist, will it be understood that freedoms have been irretrievably forfeited and the Constitution irreversibly abandoned.

PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RODRIGUEZ) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to highlight the health care needs of our communities throughout this country. I am deeply concerned with the lack of attention that the House leadership and the administration has paid, not just to managed-care reform, but to health care as a whole.

Every day, millions of Americans suffer from diseases that we could prevent, diseases we could treat, diseases that we could cure. But we have not made the commitment to take care of that.

We must not let them down. In this Special Order tonight, we look at the Patients' Bill of Rights, as well as the issue of health care.

It is time for us to also consider the fact that there are a lot of individuals out there who are sick and that need our assistance, and we must not forget them.

We hear so much about values, and the greatest value I know is helping those who need the assistance. And who needs the assistance more than those afflicted with the diseases of the body and of the mind?

There is no doubt that this particular issue is an issue that continues to

haunt us and is an issue that as a country we need to come to grips with. The Patients' Bill of Rights is an important piece of legislation. Not only does it make sense, but it also is the right thing to do.

The Ganske-Dingell bill accomplishes the critical goals of managed-care reform. First, one of the things that it does, it gives every American the right to choose their own doctor. That makes every sense in the world. That is the fact that each one of us should have, the right to choose our own doctor.

Secondly, the bill covers all Americans with employer-based health insurance, as well as other bills that, remarkably, exclude individuals such as firefighters, church employees, and teachers.

Thirdly, this bill ensures that we extend external reviews of medical decisions that are conducted by independent and qualified physicians. We should not be allowing insurance accountants and people who are going to be looking at the all-mighty dollar when deciding the decisions of health care of those people that are insured.

Fourthly, it holds a plan accountable when the plan makes a bad decision that harms and kills someone. If the insurance and managed-care system decides not to provide access to care to someone, then we need to look at that seriously; and that is occurring throughout the country.

Finally, it guarantees that health care decisions are made based on the medical, not the financial, considerations. Managed-care companies must put health care first, and the Patients' Bill of Rights creates the incentives to make sure that that occurs.

Tonight, I am also joined here with the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON). I am glad that he is here.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON).

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RODRIGUEZ) for yielding to me.

I wanted to come here tonight, Mr. Speaker, to speak on the Patients' Bill of Rights, which is currently being debated in Congress, and primarily to join my other friend from Texas here and talk specifically about some of the applicability of issues facing the Hispanic community in Texas and across the Nation.

But as I listened to the gentleman talk, I wanted to make another comment before I get into these particular remarks, because as the gentleman talked about the accessibility, about a person who might want to be treated for an illness that they know there is a cure for but to which they have no access, it reminds me of a friend of mine in Nederland, Texas, right by Beaumont in the heart of the 9th Congressional District, who is a school teacher, Regina Cowles; and Regina contracted breast cancer just a couple of years ago, and she found a treatment for that cancer in Houston. But because her insurance company made the decision