

HONORING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE MORTON SALT PLANT

(Mr. REGULA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. REGULA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the achievements of the Morton Salt plant, a company from Wayne County in Rittman, Ohio. I am confident that you will recognize this company by the Morton umbrella girl, a familiar sight on the Morton products, and by the slogan "When It Rains It Pours." What you may not know is the long history of safety that the Rittman plant has experienced.

Today, I rise to recognize the dedicated employees of the Morton plant in Rittman, Ohio, for the recent achievement of 5 million work hours without a lost-time incident. This is a record within the Morton Salt Company as well as the entire North American salt industry.

Since 1848, the Morton Salt Company has been North America's leading producer and marketer of salt for home, water conditioning, industrial, agriculture, and highway use. Morton's Rittman's facility employees process thousands of tons of household salt each day.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, mining and manufacturing can be high-risk professions. This plant employs approximately 285 employees. And since June of 1995, injury accidents have not forced any worker to take time off from work. This milestone shows the dedication to health and safety of these people. I congratulate all of them for their outstanding achievement.

RECOGNIZING JACK DANIEL'S DISTILLERY ON THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF WINNING THE GOLD MEDAL AT THE 1904 ST. LOUIS WORLD'S FAIR

(Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DAVIS of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker and Members of the House, as the current Member of Congress representing Jack Daniel's and its employees, it is my honor to pay tribute to this Tennessee treasure.

Since 1863, in the spirit of George Washington, the father of the American distillery industry, the Jack Daniel's distillery, has produced the most popular Tennessee whiskey. Jack Daniel's has produced and responsibly brought a part of Tennessee heritage to millions of adult consumers in 135 countries around the world. Jack Daniel's Tennessee whiskey is the United States' number one exported distilled spirit.

Jack Daniel's, located in Moore County in the 4th Congressional District of Tennessee, has a long tradition of bringing friends and neighbors together. Furthermore, it has been a

major source for employment and tourism revenue in Moore County and Lynchburg, Tennessee.

I would like to express the U.S. House of Representatives' heartfelt congratulations on the 100th anniversary of Jack Daniel's 1904 World's Fair Gold Medal.

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG DISCOUNT CARDS

(Mr. HASTERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, 2 months from today, American senior citizens will begin to realize discounts on their pharmaceutical medications. June 1 is when Medicare-approved prescription drug discount cards hit the streets, and savings between 10 and 25 percent on their life-saving drugs take effect.

This is a much-needed first step for seniors seeking relief on their monthly bills. These Medicare-approved discount cards are part of the new Medicare law that Congress passed and the President signed. It includes coverage of pharmaceutical costs, some new preventative care benefits, like free physical exams and better care for seniors with chronic illnesses.

To learn more, I am urging my constituents in northern Illinois to call 1-800-MEDICARE, that is, 1-800-MEDICARE, or log on to WWW.MEDICARE.gov. These two informative sources run by the Department of Health and Human Services will provide unfiltered, unfettered news seniors can use about their new drug benefits.

MEDICARE PROVIDES EMPLOYERS INCENTIVE TO KEEP PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE FOR RETIREES

(Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to set the record straight on the Medicare prescription drug plan. Since the mid-1980s, the number of employers offering prescription drug coverage to their retirees has been declining steadily. In 1988, 66 percent of employers provided these benefits to retirees. In the year 2000, it was only 34 percent.

To address this alarming trend, the Medicare prescription drug bill provides employers an incentive to keep their coverage. They are going to get 28 cents for every dollar that they spend on prescription drug benefits for their retirees. This applies to all employer-sponsored prescription drug coverage and those of corporations, unions, and government entities.

Because of these incentives, AARP and the American Medical Association endorse the bill that we passed last

year. It is unfortunate that Democrats continue to twist the truth and distort the facts by scaring seniors into believing that this bill would cause them to lose benefits. That is the furthest thing from the truth. What the Democrats do not tell seniors is that for the first time Congress has acted to slow this trend.

THE NEW HIGHWAY BILL

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, since the days of the Roman Empire, nations have understood the connection between roads and prosperity and national security. And today Congress will deliberate on a new highway bill, which I will support only if it can be fiscally responsible and fair to so-called donor States like Indiana.

But I rise at the outset of this debate to congratulate the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) and the membership of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for resisting the temptation to raise gasoline taxes. With the news this morning that OPEC will be cutting production and raising the cost of crude, that gasoline is at \$3 a gallon on the West Coast, I am personally grateful to the chairman of the transportation committee and all of its membership for saying with regard to this highway bill, no new taxes.

LET US SOLVE THE INEQUITIES IN THE TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ACT

(Mr. FLAKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Speaker, as we debate the transportation reauthorization bill today, I think we need to abide by one simple principle: solutions for transportation safety, congestion, and pollution and transit should not be determined by which Members face difficult campaigns or which Members sit on influential committees. These kinds of determinations are being made in H.R. 3550 unless we make some changes to it.

This approach to funding is inconsistent, especially with the stated objectives of the bill, and it results in inequitable distribution of funding between the States.

As we debate the reauthorization, we need to consider solutions that give States discretion and flexibility in the use of funding, financed by their own citizens and highway users.

I have an amendment before the House today that would neither strike nor prevent Members from securing earmarks for their district. What it would do, however, is prevent those States that benefit disproportionately from earmarks from drawing funding away from States that, in spite of a few earmarks, end up faring much worse.

I urge support for this amendment.

HIGH-RISK NON-PROFIT SECURITY ENHANCEMENT ACT

(Mr. NETHERCUTT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Mr. Speaker, this morning I will be joining with my colleagues, the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER), the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS), and the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE), to introduce the High-risk Non-profit Security Enhancement Act.

Our legislation has three key components. It directs the Department of Homeland Security to provide \$100 million in grants and loan guarantees for security enhancements at non-profit organizations that are at high risk of international terrorism. It assists local law enforcement agencies that provide security for regions with high concentrations of non-profits with \$50 million in grants. And the bill establishes an Office of Community Relations and Civic Affairs at the Department of Homeland Security to facilitate this program.

Since September 11, the Federal Government has dedicated significant resources to improving the security of government facilities. We have successfully deterred attacks for more than 2 years, but we must remain vigilant and continue to devote resources to potential targets.

As government facilities have fortified against the threat of terrorism, terrorists may turn their attention to less fortified, but equally symbolic, targets. Leading non-profit organizations may become targets as an unintended consequence of our efforts. They represent the heart and soul of our communities, and the forces that want to destroy America understand their value. They believe they understand the importance of these organizations in our culture and our society.

This legislation will protect non-profit organizations throughout America, and I urge my colleagues to support this very important legislation.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3550.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. NETHERCUTT). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Alaska?

There was no objection.

TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ACT: A LEGACY FOR USERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of Tuesday, March 30, 2004, and rule XVIII, the

Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 3550.

□ 1027

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 3550) to authorize funds for Federal-aid highways, highway safety programs, and transit programs, and for other purposes, with Mr. SHAW in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the order of the House of Tuesday, March 30, 2004, the bill is considered as read the first time.

General debate shall not exceed 2 hours and 40 minutes with 2 hours and 10 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure including a final period of 10 minutes following consideration of the bill for amendment and 30 minutes equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG).

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I feel somewhat like the sinner appearing before the bishop when Your Honorable is in the Chair; but with all due respect, I do relish this moment. We are here today to support H.R. 3550, the Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, known as TEA LU.

This bill is a result of a great deal of hard work and cooperation by the Members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on a bipartisan basis.

I want to first thank the ranking minority member of our committee, my good friend, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR). He has been a real champion of transportation, working with me to craft this legislation.

I also want to thank the chairman of the Subcommittee of Highways, Transit and Pipelines, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI). His leadership and dedication contributed greatly to bringing this bill to the floor today.

□ 1030

He has traveled many, many miles to try to bring the information and gather the information from the citizens of this great Nation.

In addition, I appreciate the support and cooperation of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI), ranking minority member of the subcommittee. This effort demonstrates that, through bipartisanship, working together in cooperation, we can achieve I believe great things and legislate great things in this body.

I particularly want to thank our Speaker, the gentleman from Illinois

(Mr. HASTERT), for his leadership in moving this important legislation along. He has ensured that this body will be able to work its will and proceed as an independent branch of our government under our Constitution, and I do deeply appreciate his support.

In addition, we could not have brought this bill to the floor today without the support and assistance of the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) from the Committee on Ways and Means. Chairman THOMAS is proposing some changes to existing law that will provide additional revenues into the Highway Trust Fund. His proposal makes it possible to achieve a better bill, and I appreciate his advice and counsel.

Lastly, I want to thank the gentleman from Iowa (Chairman NUSSLE) of the Committee on the Budget. He and his staff have been invaluable in ensuring that we continue the principles contained in TEA 21 that guarantee that highway trust funds will be spent on transportation, as promised to the American people. We have worked closely together to reach an agreement that meets both our needs at this point in time.

We have worked with other committee chairmen on provisions contained in the bill; and, without their help, we would not have been able to bring this bill to the floor today. We will continue to work with other committees in a cooperative fashion as we proceed to conference.

Mr. Chairman, traffic congestion, poor roads and hazardous highways are not Republican or Democrat problems. These are problems shared by all Americans, from all walks of life or economic conditions and all political parties.

Today, congestion on our highways is greatly reducing the quality of life for American families. Congestion, congestion, congestion causes over \$67 billion in lost productivity and wasted fuels, \$67 billion lost that produces nothing. It costs the average driver \$1,160 a year and more than a week and a half spent stuck in traffic. I want to stress that again. Average driver, \$1,160 a year and more than a week and a half spent stuck in traffic.

H.R. 3550 provides a new emphasis and a new program to relieve congestion, maximize roadway capacity and remove bottlenecks. In addition, more than 42,000 Americans are killed and 3.3 million are seriously injured each year on our highways. Nearly a third of the fatal crashes are caused by poor roads and roadside hazards. These fatalities are totally preventable.

H.R. 3550 creates a new core program for highway safety infrastructure improvements, a new high-risk rural road safety program and supports a number of safety programs aimed at human factors that contribute to accidents.

Mr. Chairman, we live in a global economy. Moving freight quickly and on time is absolutely essential to remain competitive and to retaining our