

TRIBUTE TO JOHN A. WILLIAMS
SR. OF PADUCAH

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I pay tribute today to John A. Williams, Sr. of Paducah, KY for his diligence and commitment to the community in which he lives. Mr. Williams was honored for his civic work at the Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner on Thursday, January 29, 2004.

In 1965, John A. Williams founded Computer Services, Inc., CSI, under the initiative to provide the finest bank date processing services in Western Kentucky and Illinois. CSI, which began with six employees and three customers, was an agreement of three Paducah banks to consolidate for the initiative. Mr. Williams continues as chairman of the board for CSI, which is now ranked as the fourth largest bank data processing company in the nation and continues to bring new technology and jobs to the region it serves.

Additionally, Mr. Williams has served on the board of every major business, civic, and cultural organization in Paducah. He is currently on the board of Paducah Power Systems, and has served on a number of Governors' Commissions for the Commonwealth.

The Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce named Mr. Williams Distinguished Citizen for his work in securing money for the Luther F. Carson Four Rivers Center, leading a campaign that raised more the \$9 million for the performing arts center. The citizens of Paducah are proud of the beautiful, downtown Four Rivers Center and appreciate Mr. Williams and the other citizens that put so much time and energy into securing the funds for the center. The center opens at the end of February and will provide the entire region with a wide variety of entertainment, cultural, and educational programs.

Mr. Williams is a tribute to Paducah and the entire Commonwealth of Kentucky. I thank the Senate for allowing me to recognize him and the contributions he has made.●

BILL WORKMAN

• Mr. GRAHAM of South Carolina. Mr. President, thank you for this opportunity to recognize the accomplishments of one of my constituents Bill Workman.

I rise to commend him for his previous work as Mayor of Greenville, SC from 1983 to 1995, his many years of tireless community activities, and his most recent position as vice president of South Carolina District Operations of Piedmont Natural Gas Company. He is scheduled to retire from this position in February 2004.

Mr. Workman also serves as president of the Greenville County Research and Technological Development Corporation and as charter chairman of the Greenville Area Development Corporation.

Over the past few decades, Greenville and upstate South Carolina have slow-

ly been transformed from being a textile capital of the world to a much more diversified economy. Since 1985, engineering, telecommunications, retail and knowledge-based companies have joined manufacturing as major sources of new jobs. There is no doubt Greenville is now one of the Southeast regions' premier cities for business.

Bill Workman played a leading role in this evolution and has made many noteworthy contributions to Greenville and upstate South Carolina.

He served as a past president of the Municipal Association of South Carolina and is a recipient of the Order of the Palmetto, a graduate of Leadership South Carolina, and is listed in Who's Who in America. He was named the 1999 Nelson Mullins Business Person of the Year in Greenville and Volunteer of the Year for 2000-2001 by the South Carolina Economic Developers Association.

Mr. Workman is a graduate of The Citadel and served 2 years active duty. He has worked as a newspaper reporter for the Charleston News and Courier and the Greenville News. He later taught and served as dean of Allied Health Sciences at Greenville Technical College. He served 6 years on the school board of Greenville County and was a founder of the S.C. Literacy Association.

He served as executive assistant for natural resources and economic development for Gov. James B. Edwards. Mr. Workman's selfless efforts also include community economic analyses and siting studies involving hundreds of counties in North America.

He has two sons, three stepdaughters, and three grandchildren and is married to the former Patti Gage Fishburne of Walterboro.

We all appreciate his years of service to his community and wish him the very best in all his future endeavors. Mr. Workman may retire in February from his position with Piedmont Natural Gas, but as his past history has shown, he will never retire from his commitment to making Greenville a great place to live.●

NTCA 50th ANNIVERSARY

• Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association as they celebrate their 50th anniversary. I take great pride in the fact that BEK Communications Cooperative of Steele, ND is among the founding members of NTCA. Forming soon after the Rural Electrification Administration, REA—today known as the Rural Utilities Service—was granted authority to make loans to telephone companies, BEK and its fellow members in the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association, NTCA, have evolved from providing basic multiparty telephone service to offering a full array of advanced telecommunications services.

Rural telecommunications carriers owe a debt of gratitude to REA, and

those who sought to expand its role. The idea of expanding the scope and authority of the REA, began in the late 1930s when REA Administrator John Carmody wrote:

Personally, I have long felt there was a real opportunity for constructive assistance to rural people in the idea of Federal financing of farm telephone lines. It seems to me that the rural people have just as much right to up-to-date communication as they have to modern power. There's no question in my mind but that Government assistance will be required if the job is ever to be completed.

This idea remained just an idea until 1944 when Senator Lister Hill, a Democrat from Alabama, introduced legislation calling for the formation of the Rural Telephone Administration, modeled after the REA. Senator Hill was soon joined in his effort to bring telephone service to rural America by Representative W.R. "Bob" Poage, Democrat from Texas, who introduced similar legislation calling for the expansion of the existing REA to make telephone loans.

Following 4 years of failed attempts, Congress finally succeeded in passing the telephone amendments to the Rural Electrification Act. On October 28, 1949, President Harry Truman signed the measure into law, which granted the REA the authority to make loans for the extension and improvement of rural telephone service.

Soon thereafter, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, NRECA, created a telephone committee, composed of representatives of newly formed joint electric-telephone cooperative organizations. By 1954, representatives from these co-ops, with the encouragement of NRECA, decided that the time had come to form a separate national organization to represent telephone cooperatives.

On June 1, 1954, eight companies, including my constituent then known as BEK Mutual Aid Corporation, along with: Buggs Island Telephone Cooperative, Chase City, VA; Mark Twain Rural Telephone Company, Bethel, MO; Mid-Rivers Telephone Cooperative, Inc. Circle, MT; Pineland Telephone Cooperative, Inc. Metter, GA; Winnebago Cooperative Telephone Association, Lake Mills, IA, Twin Lakes Telephone Cooperative Gainesboro, TN, and North Central Telephone Cooperative Lafayette, TN formed the National Telephone Cooperative Association, which was later renamed the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association.

BEK, whose name was formed by the initials of Burleigh, Emmons, and Kidder counties, was incorporated in 1952, and was one of the first recipients of telephone loans from the REA. In fact, the company received its first REA loan for \$371,000 in April 1952 to purchase and upgrade its Hazleton, ND exchange. In 1954, REA approved a second loan for \$1,499,000. This funding enabled BEK to expand their service territory with the purchase of several independent telephone companies and to

begin the process of establishing modern dial exchanges. The Hazleton exchange became the first to be cut over to modern dial service on March 3, 1956. BEK continued to grow and prosper throughout the 1950's and 1960's. In April 1967, a third REA loan enabled BEK to begin upgrading its system to one party service. By June 10, 1977, all of BEK's 12 exchanges had been upgraded to one-party service.

What began as a dream in the minds of rural residents 50 years ago has evolved into a diverse, state-of-the-art telecommunications company serving 6,000 members across 5,700 square miles in a six-county area. Today BEK Communications provides many basic and advanced services including: local and long distance telephone service, dial-up and high speed Internet access, using DSL & satellite technologies, advanced intelligent network features, ISDN, dedicated data circuits, voice mail, automated attendant functions, centrex and more.

BEK's success and its commitment to providing exemplary telecommunications services to its members is indicative of all the rural telecommunications carriers that make up the membership of the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association. NTCA's membership has expanded from eight members in seven States to 558 members spread across 45 States. These small rural telecommunications systems provide voice services to approximately 3,270,000 subscribers over a combined territory comprising some 40 percent of the geographic United States. On average, NTCA member-companies serve rural areas with a population density averaging between one to five customers per square mile, a sharp contrast from the Bell companies average of 130 customers per square mile. Today, NTCA member-companies on average serve 5,100 subscribers. In addition to their traditional voice offerings, most are also engaged in the provision of some combination of Internet, wireless, long distance, paging, and cable or satellite television services.

Through it all, NTCA members have maintained that local touch that can only be found by folks serving their friends and neighbors. With the financial assistance of the Rural Utilities Service, NTCA members remain on the cutting edge of technology by expanding broadband opportunities through such means as fiber-to-the-home projects in communities across this country. NTCA rural telecommunications companies continue to connect the heartland of America to the world. NTCA and its 558 member-companies should be commended for their ever present commitment to rural America. Happy 50th Anniversary, NTCA.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

TRANSMITTING THE BUDGET OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2005—PM 62

The Presiding Officer laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred jointly to the Committees on Appropriations and on the Budget:

The Budget I am proposing for 2005 is a reflection of this Nation's goals and purpose, and advances our three highest priorities. First, America will prevail in the War on Terror by defeating terrorists and their supporters. Second, we will continue to strengthen our homeland defenses. Third, this Nation is building on the economic recovery that began in earnest in 2003 with policies that further promote growth and job creation. In addition, we will continue to strengthen the domestic institutions that best express our values, and serve the basic needs of all: good schools, quality and affordable health care, and programs that promote hope and compassion in our communities. In meeting these priorities, the Government must exercise fiscal responsibility by limiting spending growth, focusing on the results of Government programs, and cutting wasteful spending.

In 2003, America made great progress in the War on Terror. Afghanistan, which once was ruled by the repressive Taliban regime, now has adopted a new constitution, taking a fundamental step on the path to democracy. In Iraq, the remnants of the Ba'athist regime are being systematically rounded up, and Iraqis are assuming responsibility for their own security and future government. Libya has pledged to disclose and dismantle all of the regime's weapons of mass destruction programs.

These victories do not change a fundamental truth: Our Nation remains at war. In this war, which began on September 11, 2001, our citizens are the strategic targets of our enemy. We have responded in two significant ways: First, we have taken the offensive to hunt down the terrorists, deny them easy refuge, identify and seize their secret finances, and hold them and their sponsors to account. Second, we have moved to secure the Nation's homeland. In 2003, the new Department of Homeland Security began operations in the biggest reorganization of the Federal Government in half a century. Over this past year, we have taken

steps to reduce the terrorist threat to Americans here at home, and protect American interests overseas. This Nation has committed itself to the long war against terror. And we will see that war to its inevitable conclusion: The destruction of the terrorists.

Our Budget reflects the continuing importance of providing for the defense and security of the American people. We will continue to provide whatever it takes to defend our country by fully supporting our military, which is performing with great skill and honor in our battles overseas. We also are providing the necessary resources to our law enforcement and emergency personnel at home to meet the new threats posed by terrorists.

Just as we have taken much-needed steps to strengthen our national security, we have also pursued an aggressive agenda to promote our economic security. In 2003, we worked with the Congress to accelerate much of the tax relief that had been passed in 2001, so that Americans could keep more of their paychecks and so that businesses would have more incentive to invest in new jobs and new equipment. As a result, our economy is strong, and growing stronger. Economic output in the third quarter rose at its fastest annual pace in nearly 20 years. More manufacturers reported rising factory activity than at any point in the last 20 years. American homeownership reached its highest level ever. Employment is on the rise. By cutting tax rates on investment gains and dividend payments, we promoted saving, capital formation, and investment—and Americans' holdings in the stock market rose by almost \$3 trillion.

There is still more to do, however. We cannot be satisfied until every American looking for work has found a job. We must sustain the momentum of this recovery by making the tax relief passed in 2001 and 2003 permanent. We will continue to open markets abroad for American products. And as the economy improves, we will also confront the challenge faced by workers who must learn new skills to fill new jobs. As a Nation, we must help Americans develop the skills they need to succeed in a highly competitive, highly productive economy. And so this budget continues to support high standards in our schools and proposes a Jobs for the 21st Century initiative to ensure older students and adults can gain the skills they need to find work now.

Economic growth and good stewardship of taxpayer dollars will help us meet another important priority: Cutting the budget deficit brought on by recession and war. We must continue to evaluate each Federal program, to make sure that it meets its goals, and produces the desired results. I propose to hold discretionary spending growth below four percent, less than the average rate of growth of American family incomes. And spending unrelated to defense and homeland security will be held below one percent growth—less