

on behalf of the agency in reacting to Elmore's death. "If you wish to learn how to leave this world a better place, I command Mark Elmore to you. He was not only a skilled professional, but a man beloved by his family, staff, and the folks he served at JCDS. He gave his heart and his mind to his job, and his legacy to us is a flourishing agency, whose mission is to enhance the lives of people with disabilities—not a glamour job, but a most satisfying one," Richardson said. "He made us proud and eager to fulfill this mission. One of his last gifts was to work with the Board to ensure the health of JCDS beyond his term, which came all too soon."

County Manager Michael B. Press agreed. "His life truly exemplified the spirit of public service: to help the needy, to succor the distressed, and to serve the community without regard to the necessary personal sacrifices required," he said. "Our hearts and prayers are with his family at this time. He will be missed."

Mark Elmore is survived by his wife, Jeanette; son and daughter-in-law, Brenton and Kirsten Elmore; daughter and son-in-law, Tracie and Raymond Kaiser; and two grandsons. The couple would have celebrated their 40th anniversary next month.

Mr. Speaker, Johnson County has suffered a tremendous loss with the untimely death of Mark Elmore. I join with all Johnson Countians in mourning his loss, and place in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD two articles from the local news media reporting on Mark Elmore's life and legacy:

[From the Kansas City Star, May 18, 2005]

ADVOCATE FOR THE DISABLED DEAD AT 61

Mark Elmore, the Olathe man whose dedication and passion for those with developmental disabilities spanned more than three decades, died Sunday of a brain tumor. He was 61.

As executive director of Johnson County Developmental Supports, Elmore helped create landmark legislation in Kansas. The new laws allowed those with mental and physical challenges to live in their own homes and learn life skills vital to landing a job, making friends and finding meaning in life.

"He gave his heart and mind to this job," said Gayle Richardson, chairwoman of the support group's board of directors. "His legacy to us is a flourishing agency."

"Flourishing" was not the adjective Elmore would have chosen 27 years ago.

In 1978, he was hired to turn around the agency facing deep federal cuts that threatened to close its doors.

He streamlined the agency and improved services by listening to parents and their children about their desire to live at home, away from sterile and impersonal institutions. He found money to hire expert workers and expand services.

When Elmore started, the agency served 66 persons. Today, Johnson County Developmental Supports, also known as JCDS, serves 530 clients daily and oversees aid for more than 1,300 residents. Its annual budget is \$20 million.

"Johnson County has lost a great friend with a great heart," said Annabeth Surbaugh, chairwoman of the Johnson County Commission. "Mark Elmore was the heart and soul of JCDS."

In the early years, Elmore was known to take clients in to his own home for days and weeks at a time, Surbaugh said.

Those who knew him best describe a tireless, 36-year cheerleader and fund-raiser for the developmentally disabled who organized lobbying efforts in Topeka to create new laws and disability programs.

In 1996, he was the first to receive the Distinguished Leadership Award from InterHab, an advocacy group he helped found in 1969.

"His life truly exemplified the spirit of public service: to help the needy . . . and to support everything fine and noble," said Mike Press, the county manager.

Outside of work, Elmore enjoyed home remodeling, spending time in the Colorado Rocky Mountains and restoring a Model A, Thunderbird and a 1965 Mustang. He had planned to retire later this year.

Last week he underwent a biopsy of a spot on his brain. Surgery revealed a tumor more extensive than originally thought. He lapsed into a coma and did not regain consciousness.

He is survived by his wife, Jeanette; son and daughter-in-law, Brenton and Kirsten Elmore; daughter and son-in-law, Tracie and Raymond Kaiser; and two grandsons. The couple would have celebrated their 40th anniversary next month.

Services will be at noon Saturday at the College Church of the Nazarene, 2020 E. Sheridan St., Olathe. The family suggests memorial contributions to Friends of Johnson County Developmental Supports, 10501 Lackman Road, Lenexa, KS 66219.

Dennis Tucker, associate executive director of the support group, will serve as interim director until a new leader is named.

[From the Olathe News, May 18, 2005]

LONGTIME COUNTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DIES

(By Dan J. Smith)

The man who for nearly three decades led a county agency that provides care for people with developmental disabilities has died.

Olathe resident Mark Elmore helped grow Johnson County Developmental Supports and had served as the organization's executive director since 1978. Elmore, who was 61, died Sunday at Olathe Medical Center.

"Mark was one of the special people that come around once in a lifetime," said Trish Moore, Elmore's friend and director of human services and aging for the county. "He believed in what he was doing, and he created programs that will last and help people forever. He left a great legacy."

Under Elmore's leadership, JCDS earned three-year national accreditations nine consecutive times and provided services each day to more than 500 people with mental retardation and other disabilities.

"He had incredible passion for what he was doing," Moore said. "He had wonderful ethics, and he was a great advocate. He was the person that you would want as a colleague, as a neighbor and as a friend."

Elmore opened his home to several JCDS clients during the agency's infancy, said Annabeth Surbaugh, chair of the Johnson County Commission.

"I've been here as an elected person for 13 years, and to myself and many people in this county, Mark was Developmental Supports," Surbaugh said. "He had been there so long, and he was so committed to it that it wasn't a job. It was his mission in life."

"If you wish to learn how to leave this world a better place, I command Mark Elmore to you," a written statement read from Gayle Richardson, chair of the commission-appointed JCDS board, which oversees the agency. "He was not only a skilled professional, but a man beloved by his family, staff and the folks he served at JCDS."

"He made us proud and eager to fulfill his mission," Richardson wrote. "One of his last gifts was to work with the board to ensure the health of JCDS beyond his term, which came all too soon."

Elmore and his wife, Jeanette, would have celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary next month. Jeanette, two children and two grandchildren survive.

A noon funeral service is scheduled for Saturday at the College Church of the Nazarene, 2020 E. Sheridan St. Penwell-Gabel Funeral Home is handling funeral arrangements.

The family suggests memorial contributions to the Friends of Johnson County Developmental Supports, 10501 Lackman Road.

Dennis Tucker, associate executive director of JCDS, will assume interim executive director duties until a successor is named.

IN RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION WEEK

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 23, 2005

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I rise today, during National Transportation Week, to recognize our remarkable transportation accomplishments and to draw attention to the critical challenges that we now face.

During the half-century that has passed between the first permanent Transportation Week in 1962 and this week in 2005, we have created a world-class transportation system that moved our nation forward to the 21st century.

We built an Interstate System that now extends more than 46,000 miles.

We built major new subway systems in cities like San Francisco; Washington, DC; and Atlanta.

We created a cabinet-level Department of Transportation.

We created Amtrak to preserve intercity passenger rail service.

And we maintained and expanded a Federal transportation financing system based largely on the collection of gas taxes.

Unfortunately, that system of financing is now breaking down and our forward progress is threatened.

This week, as we celebrate the 43rd annual National Transportation Week, we are 2 years into the effort to reauthorize Federal transportation spending.

Unfortunately, all the proposals currently under consideration fall short of funding our extensive transportation needs.

The transportation reauthorization legislation adopted by the House would provide \$284.9 billion, while the bill passed this week by the Senate would provide \$295 billion. Both of these funding levels are imperfect compromises.

Chairman YOUNG and Ranking Member OBERSTAR originally introduced the House reauthorization legislation at a funding level of \$375 billion.

The Bush Administration has, however, demanded that spending be limited to \$284.9 billion—or a figure that is approximately \$90 billion below the level of investment that even the Department of Transportation says is needed.

What is the real difference between \$375 billion and \$285 billion?

It is the difference between merely maintaining a transportation system in which drivers experience nearly 4 billion hours of delay and constructing the new roads and transit facilities necessary to reduce congestion and to save some of the more than 40,000 lives lost on our highways each year.

It is the difference between the 13.5 million jobs that would be supported by \$285 billion and the nearly 18 million jobs that would be supported by \$375 billion.

To fill the gap between the funding the Federal Government is willing to provide and the funding that is needed, we have created so-called “innovative” financing mechanisms, such as garvee bonds.

These mechanisms enable states to issue increasing amounts of debt to try to meet the transportation needs that Federal funding is no longer meeting.

As the title of an insightful report issued this year by the Brookings Institution describes it, these are simply short-sighted and unsustainable means of building “Today’s Roads with Tomorrow’s Dollars.”

The Federal Highway Administration reports that at the end of 2003, States had more than \$77 billion in total highway related debt outstanding.

As with our growing national debt, States’ reliance on debt only shifts the burden of paying for our present transportation infrastructure needs on to future generations.

We are going to confront a time in the not-too-distant future when States will have a backlog of construction projects that cannot be built because states are still paying for the roads they built 15 years ago.

There is an old saying: even if you are on the right track, you’ll get run over if you just sit there. The transportation reauthorization bill has now been passed by both the House and the Senate. Our immediate task must be to provide a measure of relief to our States by passing a conference report as soon as possible.

As we approach the end of our sixth extension to TEA-21, we must remember that the more we delay, the less we are able to relieve the burden of debt States are incurring to fund transportation.

REMARKS FOR H.R. 540

HON. TODD TIAHRT

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 23, 2005

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in favor of H.R. 540. This bill would authorize the Equus Beds Aquifer recharge project in my district that will help meet the water needs of nearly 500,000 people in Kansas. This is an environmentally beneficial plan that will help ensure the City of Wichita, surrounding smaller communities, agriculture irrigators and local industry will have a clean and plentiful water supply for decades to come.

I want to thank Chairman POMBO for his leadership in working with me on this important project. Seeking federal authorization for the recharge of the Equus Beds Aquifer is something I have worked on for many years, and I am grateful to the Chairman and his staff for including language contained in my original bill into H.R. 540.

I also want to thank City of Wichita officials for their efforts in helping this project move forward. Their vision to ensure our community’s water needs are met both now and in the future is extremely important. Leadership from Mayor Carlos Mayans along with City Council members Carl Brewer, Sue Schlapp,

Jim Skelton, Paul Gray, Bob Martz and Shar on Fearey will continue to be needed for this project to be a success.

Wichita Water and Sewer Director David Warren and Water Supply Projects Administrator Gerald Blain have been especially helpful to me and my staff over the years in navigating the details of the recharge project. I appreciate their dedication to public service.

Nearly half a million people depend on the Equus Beds Aquifer and Cheney Reservoir to meet their water needs. Without water from the Equus Beds, Wichita and surrounding communities would face a serious water shortage.

The Equus Beds Aquifer is the body of water beneath portions of Sedgwick, Harvey, McPherson and Reno counties within the boundaries of Groundwater Management District Number 2. The aquifer lies under 900,000 acres, and annual withdrawals from the aquifer average 157,000 acre feet. Approximately 55 percent of the water is used for irrigation; 39 percent is used for municipal needs in Wichita, Halstead, Newton, Hutchinson, McPherson and Valley Center; and six percent is used by local industry.

The Equus Beds Aquifer recharge project involves taking floodwater from the Little Arkansas River and depositing that excess water into the aquifer through water supply wells after going through a filtration system.

Since the 1950’s, water levels in the aquifer have dropped 40 feet because water rights and pumping exceed the aquifer’s natural recharge rate of six inches per year. Due to this over usage, saltwater from the southwest and oilfield brine from the northwest are threatening the aquifer. When the aquifer levels were higher, the elevated levels created a natural barrier that kept the contamination at bay. Now that the water levels have dropped, the natural barrier is no longer there. If the aquifer is not replenished, the maximum chloride levels will eventually exceed what is permitted for both agricultural and municipal usage.

This aquifer recharge project is a win-win project for all the communities who depend on its water. The City of Wichita and surrounding municipalities benefit because water can be safely stored to meet short-term and long-term water supply needs.

Agriculture irrigators also benefit because the risk of saltwater contamination is reduced. Without the natural barrier of an elevated water level in the aquifer, the water would eventually become contaminated to the point where it would be unsuitable for use even on crops. Irrigators should also see reduced costs associated with pumping since the water level will rise.

The Little Arkansas River and its ecosystem also benefit. During times of drought, a natural discharge from the Equus Beds Aquifer into the river will occur creating a more stable base flow.

Under the language contained in H.R. 540, the City of Wichita will be required to maintain and operate the recharge project, which ensures the federal government will not bear costs associated with its ongoing operation costs.

Recharging the Equus Beds is the most cost-efficient means to provide water for the greater Wichita area. And it is the best option available to keep salt and oilfield brine out of this critical water supply without greatly restricting water usage.

In 2004, Gerald Bain with the City of Wichita testified before the House Committee on Resources on the need for federal authorization of the recharge project. I am including his testimony with my remarks because I think it tells of the water needs faced by our community and the many benefits that will come with a recharge of the Equus Beds.

I urge my colleagues to join me today in voting for H.R. 540. This is a good bill that will greatly benefit the people in south-central Kansas.

The 2004 testimony by Gerald T. Blain, P.E.:

The City of Wichita, Kansas has had water supply wells in the Equus Beds Aquifer for over 60 years, and the aquifer has been a major source of the City’s drinking water. However, because of excess pumping from the aquifer by municipal and agricultural users, water levels in the aquifer had declined up to 40 feet from their pre-development levels by 1992. Because of this over development, the Equus Beds aquifer is threatened by saltwater contamination from two sources. One source is natural saltwater from the Arkansas River located along the southwest border of the City’s wellfield. The other source is oilfield brine contamination left over from the development of oil wells in the Burton area in the 1930’s, located northwest of the wellfield.

Groundwater modeling by the Bureau of Reclamation indicates that the chloride levels, which are an indicator of salinity, could exceed 300 mg/l in much of the wellfield by the year 2050. This would be above the 250 mg/l standard for drinking water. In order to protect the water quality of the area, steps must be taken to retard the movement of the salt-water plumes.

In 1993 the City of Wichita began implementation of a unique Integrated Local Water Supply Plan that is intended to meet the City’s water supply needs through the year 2050. By the year 2050 it is projected that the City’s water supply needs will almost double what they are now. The City’s Plan uses a variety of local water resources to meet water needs, rather than requiring the City to transfer water from a remote reservoir in Northeast Kansas. A key component of the Plan includes an Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) project to recharge the City’s existing wellfield in the Equus Beds Aquifer.

The excess pumping from the aquifer, and the resulting water level decline, has created a storage volume of almost 65 billion gallons that can be used to store water. The basic concept of the City’s ASR project is to capture water from the Little Arkansas River and use it to recharge the aquifer. Computer modeling, and past experience at other sites throughout the country, has found that by recharging the aquifer a hydraulic barrier can be created that would retard the movement of the salt-water plumes. In addition, the 65 billion gallons that could be stored in the dewatered portion of the aquifer could be used as a component of the City’s water supply.

Unfortunately, all of the “conventional” water rights in the Little Arkansas River have already been allocated. However, excess flows in the river, which occur only after it rains or snows, have not been allocated. Computer modeling has predicted that there are enough days of excess flow that enough water can be captured to allow the aquifer to be recharged and become a valuable component of