

Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay, and others.

The International Polar Year is actually 2 years, from March 1, 2007, until March 1, 2009, allowing two field seasons of research in both the Arctic and the Antarctic. The timeframe was selected to encourage an intensive burst of effort that can be coordinated among many nations. During this time, scientists will lay the groundwork for sustained assessments of environmental change and variability. In addition, the resulting enhanced infrastructure and observation systems will provide an improved foundation for ongoing science.

In the United States, the administration has asked the National Science Foundation to lead U.S. IPY activities. NSF allocated roughly \$13 million for this fiscal year for research opportunities. The announcements for these research grants will occur sometime in late July or August of this year.

Another round of grants is expected in February or March of 2007, as the President requested \$62 million for fiscal year 2007 just in time for the start of the IPY.

Other agencies are contributing to IPY, including the National Institute of Health, NASA, the State Department, and the Department of Energy. In fact, the Department of Energy is sponsoring a summit on energy development and rural power as it relates to the Arctic. The core of the summit will be a technology conference held in Anchorage, AK, the week of October 14, 2007. Leading up to the technology conference and following the summit to its completion will be an education and outreach effort with the goal of capturing the interest of the public and decisionmakers and attracting and developing the next generation of scientists, engineers, and leaders.

Despite the many events and research projects that will be happening around the world, it is important that we not lose focus on why we are having IPY: to make a contribution that will not only serve as a benchmark in understanding the polar regions but also help leave a legacy for future scientists and researchers. The worst-case scenario for IPY is for great scientific achievements to happen over the next 2 years, and nobody knows about it. Showcasing IPY is essential.

As scientists work to achieve breakthroughs in their respective fields, they will also be increasing their collaboration with local communities and indigenous people as partners in research from designing the projects and collecting and interpreting the data to disseminating the results.

There are already projects trying to achieve a greater partnership. For example, The STUDENT-PARTNERS Project, SPP, headed by the Woods Hole Research Center in Massachusetts, unites students, teachers, and scientists to study the role of rivers in

the Arctic system and create an innovative and effective education and outreach program. By partnering with K-12 grade students and teachers living beside the largest Arctic rivers in Russia, Canada, and Alaska, the high frequency river water samples that are needed to understand hydrologic and biogeochemical fluxes in the river systems will be obtained. In the process, the capability we seek in a multinational Arctic river observing network will be developed.

In the Bering Strait School District in Alaska, teachers are trained to educate students in grades K-12 about climate change data collection and scientific study. The project blends modern science with Native tradition, language, and subsistence needs. Full community involvement has been achieved in 13 of the 15 villages in the school district.

Scientists from the Geophysical Institute at the University of Alaska work with teachers and students to collect data on weather, erosion, sea ice movement, and wave and wind action. Native elders are involved in teaching the students using the Native language, culture, and historical observations. The elders use the data to assist them in predicting dangerous weather and sea conditions as the plan for subsistence activities. What they are doing not only benefits the community and sustains Native traditions, it also generates a new generation of individuals interested in Arctic science.

The upcoming International Polar Year can play a significant role in focusing our Nation, and for that matter the world, on the work that is being done, and needs to be done, in the Arctic. I plan to use the occasion of the International Polar Year to bring more of my colleagues to the north. When I say the north, I mean going to the Permafrost tunnel in Fairbanks or the Toolik Field Station on the North Slope of Alaska to see for themselves what the Arctic is really like.

The IPY is also an opportunity to craft greater coordination and cooperation among Arctic nations so that those who live in the Arctic benefit. And perhaps most important of all, it is an opportunity to develop the next generation of Arctic researchers to carry on this important work.

I look forward to further discussions on the Arctic as the International Polar Year draws closer and the relevance of the Arctic to the Nation and the world as a whole.

CAPE VERDE INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I recognize the 31st anniversary of the independence of Cape Verde. On July 5, 1975, this island nation gained independence from Portugal and since then has established itself as one of the most politically stable and economically viable countries in Africa.

After discovery by Portuguese explorers in 1457 and then again in 1462,

Cape Verde was incorporated into the Portuguese Empire as the first European settlement in the tropics. Over the next several hundred years, it was a lucrative trading post between Europe, Africa, and the Americas.

A few years after World War II, with a growing nationalist movement, Portugal granted Cape Verde overseas province status. Within 5 years a group of Cape Verdeans and neighboring Guinea-Bissauans organized a coalition for the independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde. After the 1974 Portuguese revolution, the new government signed an independence agreement with all of Portugal's overseas provinces, including Cape Verde. After six centuries of colonial rule, Cape Verde formally gained independence on July 5, 1975.

Since the beginning of its independence, Cape Verde has strived for a democratic government. In 1991, the first multiparty elections in Cape Verdean history were held. Today, the Cape Verdean government is stable, with four parties sharing seats in the National Assembly. It has established market-oriented economic policies that are attracting foreign visitors, ensuring Cape Verde a strong service and tourism economy.

Cape Verde has also been an essential part of international security. Over the past month, Cape Verde has served as the proving grounds for the latest testing of the emerging NATO Response Force, NRF. With over 7,000 soldiers, sailors, and airmen, Exercise Steadfast Jaguar 2006 is a major test of the NRF's ability to operate quickly, strategically, and at distance. Facing a variety of environmental conditions, the NRF is able to execute its largest military maneuvers since its creation exercising a wide array of missions. The archipelago's terrain provide challenging beaches for amphibious assault, arid flatlands for ground warfare, and a mountainous volcano for humanitarian relief after a fictitious eruption. These exercises, while still ongoing, can only be measured as a success and a true representation of international cooperation.

Today there are close to 350,000 Cape Verdeans living in the United States, almost equal to the population of Cape Verde itself. Many of these Cape Verdeans make their home in Rhode Island. On behalf of the residents of my State, I wish to thank them for their contributions to our country.

Finding its place in the international community, Cape Verde has stood up to assist the world's peacekeeping force in their infancy. It is fitting we honor Cape Verde's independence along side of our own. They understand the importance of a democratic society and international responsibility. I send all Cape Verdeans in Rhode Island and around the world my best wishes as they celebrate their homeland's independence.

NATIONAL LITERACY DAY

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate the 21st anniversary of National Literacy Day, designated on July 2, 1985, by President Ronald Reagan.

In 1986, Caryl Mackin-Wagner, the executive director for Focus on Literacy Inc., worked with Congress to establish recognition by a Senate resolution of a National Literacy Day, which Congress has honored each year since.

Caryl Mackin-Wagner established Focus on Literacy, Inc., to bring a greater awareness to the problem of illiteracy in our Nation and to promote effective ways to address this problem while improving the reading skills of children and adults in America.

Developing one's reading and writing skills is a necessary tool to succeeding in this world today. It is extremely important that Americans continue to advance in order to bring about a more successful nation as a whole. We must not ignore the fact that there are many individuals who are not well educated and who are not contributing to society in ways that they could. What is cause for concern is that with inadequate education, people don't reach their full potential and contribute all that they can to our Nation. On Sunday, July 2, Congress will recognize the significance of improving the literacy of individuals, which further contributes to the growth of our society.

Each year, Congress honors National Literacy Day to celebrate literary accomplishments, which have contributed to developing a better and more educated society. As Caryl Mackin-Wagner has said, "Illiterate individuals are our untapped resource for they possess underutilized talents and abilities."

Through hard work and a commitment to helping others, Focus on Literacy, Inc. has made remarkable strides in the battle for literacy and I am proud to salute its efforts on National Literacy Day.

2005 SLOAN AWARD WINNERS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate the 2005 winners of the Alfred P. Sloan Award for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility, which recognizes companies that have successfully used flexibility to meet both business and employee goals. The Sloan Awards are presented by the When Work Works initiative, which is a project of the Families and Work Institute in partnership with the Center for Workforce Preparation, an affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the Twiga Foundation. The When Work Works initiative is sponsored by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

I would like to draw your attention to the Sloan Awards because I think these companies are to be commended for their excellence in providing workplace flexibility practices which ben-

efit both employees and employers. Achieving greater flexibility in the workplace—to maximize productivity while attracting the highest quality employees—is one of the key challenges facing American companies in the 21st century.

During the inaugural phase of the Sloan Awards in 2004-05, businesses in the following eight cities were eligible for recognition: Brooklyn, NY; Chicago, IL; Dallas, TX; Detroit, MI; Durham, NC; Long Beach, CA; Providence, RI; and Salt Lake City, UT. The Chamber of Commerce in each city hosted an interactive business forum to share research on workplace flexibility as an important component of workplace effectiveness. In these same communities, businesses applied for, and winners were selected for, the Sloan Awards through a process that included employees' views as well as employer practices.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the inaugural winners of the Alfred P. Sloan Award for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility. These businesses are to be commended for their excellence in providing workplace flexibility.

In Long Beach, CA, the winners are Dun & Bradstreet, PeacePartners, Inc., and Ward's Furniture.

In Chicago, IL, the winner is Accenture.

In Detroit, MI, the winners are Accenture, Amerisure Mutual Insurance Company, Brogan & Partners Convergence Marketing, Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce, Plexus Systems LLC, and Rossetti.

In Brooklyn, NY, the winner is Urban Monster.

In Durham, NC, the winners are the Durham Convention & Visitors Bureau and Durham Family Court.

In Providence, RI, the winners are Atrion Networking Corporation, Citizens Financial Group, Inc., KPMG, LLP, North Star Marketing, Quality Partners of Rhode Island, Rhode Island Housing, Rhode Island Legal Services, Inc., and Sojourner House, Inc.

In Dallas, TX, the winners are Accenture, CareerLink Companies, Center for Housing Resources, Inc., Community Council of Greater Dallas, Lee Hecht Harrison, McQueary Henry Bowles Troy, LLP, Medical City Hospital, Texas Instruments, and TravisWolff & Company, LLP.

In Salt Lake City, UT, the winners are ARUP Laboratories, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, McKinnon-Mulherin, Inc., and Radius Engineering Inc.

2005 was the inaugural year for these awards. Building on the success of the first year, Phase II of the When Work Works initiative will extend the number of participating communities to 17 in 2006 and 24 in 2007. Again, I congratulate the 2005 winners and look forward to the expansion of this exciting initiative.

COMMENDING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESCUE TEAMS

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to commend the efforts and extraordinary dedication of the volunteer firefighters and emergency rescue teams throughout New Mexico who have been working tirelessly to assist in fighting fires and meeting the needs of citizens throughout the State as they cope with the worst fire season in decades.

It has already been an incredibly difficult fire season for the people of the Southwest. New Mexico is suffering a drought of historic proportions. The State spent the winter preparing for a summer fire season they hoped wouldn't happen. Unfortunately, the worst fears of the State are quickly becoming a reality. By the end of June, more than 100,000 acres of land will have burned and the State will have already faced more than 20 named fires and countless unnamed fires of varying size and intensity. Hundreds of people have been evacuated, property lost, and communities changed forever. Bear Paw, Rivera Mesa, Energen, Martinez, Skates, Bear, Eicks, Wilson, and Malpais, are the names of just a few of the large fires that the State has already faced this year.

Throughout this time I have been deeply impressed by the work of Federal, State, Tribal, and local fire fighters. But the work of these professionals would be impossible without the commitment of the volunteer firefighters and rescue teams who have unfailingly answered the call to service. These volunteers exemplify the best spirit of New Mexico. They have courageously worked the fire lines, offered their support and a shoulder to cry on, provided a bed and warm meal to evacuees, and helped to corral and move pets and livestock out of harm's way. They do all this while some of their own families and homes face the same fire danger. While I am not surprised at the selflessness of my fellow New Mexicans, I am forever grateful to these volunteers.

The work of these volunteer firefighters and rescue teams has been essential in meeting the challenges of a very active fire season. Throughout New Mexico volunteer firefighters and rescue teams have responded at all times of the day and night. Some have worked for many days in a row to ensure that all the needs of their community were met and the necessary resources were in place. Their bravery and selflessness has been an example to all New Mexicans, and I strongly commend them for their work.

I know that I am joined today by every New Mexican in saying thank you to our volunteer firefighters and rescue teams and in the hope for their continued safety in the face of the fire dangers they face.