

eliminating poverty around the world. It is also a reflection of the valuable role he has played in giving back to his local community.

Don Amert with East Central South Dakota Habitat for Humanity is a partner in Amert Construction of Madison, SD. He has provided leadership as the East Central South Dakota Habitat for Humanity's construction chairman. Along with help from volunteers, Don completed the first 2 houses for East Central South Dakota Habitat for Humanity. Not only did Don provide affordable housing, but he also taught his volunteers proper building techniques.

It gives me great pleasure to recognize Don Amert and to congratulate him on receiving this well-earned award and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

#### RECOGNIZING OWEN BAIN

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Owen Bain for receiving the Supporter of the Year Award from the South Dakota Habitat for Humanity. This is a prestigious award that reflects his hard work and dedication to eliminating poverty around the world. It is also a reflection of the valuable role he has played in giving back to his local community.

Owen Bain works with the Habitat for Humanity of Beadle County. He is a hobby carpenter and has volunteered more than 180 hours of labor in Habitat's recent projects. Owen played an integral role in the building process, all the while maintaining his humble disposition. Owen is a model volunteer who has contributed greatly to the success of Habitat for Humanity.

It gives me great pleasure to recognize Owen Bain and to congratulate him on receiving this well-earned award and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

#### RECOGNIZING BENCHMARK FOAM, INC.

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Benchmark Foam Inc. for receiving the Supporter of the Year Award from the South Dakota Habitat for Humanity. This is a prestigious award that reflects their hard work and dedication to eliminating poverty around the world. It is also a reflection of the valuable role they have played in giving back to their local community.

Benchmark Foam Inc. is partnered with Watertown Region Habitat for Humanity and is based in Watertown, South Dakota. The Benchmark team has produced and provided expanded polystyrene and other specialty plastics for the construction of Habitat homes. Benchmark has developed a longstanding relationship with the Watertown Region affiliate. Benchmark and its employees have made their mark on the Habitat for Humanity progress in the area.

It gives me great pleasure to recognize Benchmark Foam Inc. and to congratulate them on receiving this well-earned award and wish them continued success in the years to come.●

#### RECOGNIZING CLARK'S RENTALS

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Clark's Rentals for receiving the Supporter of the Year Award from the South Dakota Habitat for Humanity. This is a prestigious award that reflects their hard work and dedication to eliminating poverty around the world. It is also a reflection of the valuable role they have played in giving back to their local community.

Clark's Rentals is partnered with Habitat for Humanity of Yankton County. Clark's Rentals began operating in 1991, and after only 5 years they supported the new Yankton affiliate of Habitat for Humanity by providing equipment without cost. Through their support of Habitat's mission, Clark's Rentals has enabled the Yankton affiliate to expand their goal of providing affordable housing. Special recognition is due to Larry and Joan Clark of Clark's Rentals as well as their supportive staff members, Carl Clark, Ray Dorat, and Jimmy Olson.

It gives me great pleasure to recognize Clark's Rentals and to congratulate them on receiving this well-earned award and wish them continued success in the years to come.●

#### RECOGNIZING CAROLYN DOWNS

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, Carolyn Downs is the outgoing executive director of The Banquet in Sioux Falls, SD who is stepping down after 20 years of service to the Sioux Falls community.

The Banquet, an ecumenical ministry, has been providing free meals to the Sioux Falls community since 1985. In the past year, The Banquet served 137,000 guests. Since she started her work with The Banquet in 1988, Carolyn has organized thousands of volunteers and served countless meals. Carolyn learned from her mother at a young age that sharing meals was a way that people show their love to others. The secret to her success is her ability to put herself in other people's shoes. Carolyn encourages her volunteers to not only provide food to those that come to her center, but also to express compassion and understanding through conversation and interaction. Carolyn's love for others is reflected in her perpetual smile and her giving spirit.

South Dakota's communities are held together by dedicated individuals like Carolyn Downs who commit their time and energy to helping those around them. She is truly an example of what it means to serve others. Her leadership and dedication to The Banquet will be greatly missed. It gives me great pleasure to congratulate Carolyn on a successful career and wish her the best on her retirement.●

#### RECOGNIZING DAVE FLECK

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Dave Fleck for receiving the Supporter of the Year Award from the South Dakota Habitat for Humanity. This is a prestigious award that reflects his hard work and dedication to eliminating poverty around the world. It is also a reflection of the valuable role he has played in giving back to his local community.

Dave Fleck works with the Greater Sioux Falls Habitat for Humanity. His company, Sioux Falls Construction, has donated construction management services to the Greater Sioux Falls Habitat affiliate. Dave has taken on leadership roles in the construction and site selection for 8 years now. He has participated in Habitat activities at every level. Dave is also a member of the chamber of commerce. The Greater Sioux Falls Habitat for Humanity truly benefits from the support that Dave Fleck provides.

It gives me great pleasure to recognize Dave Fleck and to congratulate him on receiving this well-earned award and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

#### RECOGNIZING THE JOHN T. VUCUREVICH FOUNDATION

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the John T. Vucurevich Foundation for receiving the Supporter of the Year Award from the South Dakota Habitat for Humanity. This is a prestigious award that reflects their hard work and dedication to eliminating poverty around the world. It is also a reflection of the valuable role they have played in giving back to their local community.

The John T. Vucurevich Foundation works with the Black Hills Area Habitat for Humanity. With the impressive financial support the John T. Vucurevich Foundation has shown, the Black Hills Area Habitat affiliate has been able to obtain a ReStore Outlet. The John T. Vucurevich Foundation has shown its continued support by providing construction materials and furthering the goals of the Black Hills Area affiliate in many ways.

It gives me great pleasure to recognize the John T. Vucurevich Foundation and to congratulate them on receiving this well-earned award and wish them continued success in the years to come.●

#### HONORING JUNE JAMES

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to honor June James of Hazel, SD. June was chosen as the 2007 Spirit of South Dakota Award winner. This impressive award reflects June's vision, courage, and strength of character in the development of her family, community, and State.

June is a lifelong South Dakotan who reflects the values and traditions that make our State great. She is dedicated

to her family and the Hazel community. She has demonstrated this dedication through her involvement in her church, her work as an extension coordinator in Codington County and Hamlin County, and her service to the local 4H chapter. In addition to all this, June and her husband run the family's century farm. Clearly June reflects the qualities that make her deserving of this year's 2007 Spirit of South Dakota award.

I am proud to honor June James, along with her friends and family, in celebrating her 50 years of selfless dedication and service to the city of Hazel.●

#### HONORING THOMAS "EMMETT" KUEHL

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to honor Thomas "Emmett" Kuehl. Thomas was a volunteer firefighter for the Elkton Fire Department. He served for 17 years and was an EMT for 16 years with the Elkton ambulance crew. He died at 38 years old on April 11, 2006, from injuries sustained while operating at the scene of a fire. The 26th National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service is honoring Emmett as a fallen hero.

Emmett was not only a brave firefighter, he was a man dedicated to his local community. As a supporter of Elkton athletics, Emmett could be counted on to drive the ambulance for the Elkton football team. For his 16 years of dedication to the team, the Elks dedicated their 2006 season to Emmett and finished runner-up in the class 9AA championships at the State tournament.

Emmett was a great American, and his commitment to the people of Elkton was truly honorable. Today I rise with Emmett Kuehl's family and friends to remember his selfless dedication and service to the Elkton community and the State of South Dakota.●

#### RECOGNIZING KIM LARSON

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Kim Larson for receiving the Supporter of the Year Award from the South Dakota Habitat for Humanity. This is a prestigious award that reflects her hard work and dedication to eliminating poverty around the world. It is also a reflection of the valuable role she has played in giving back to her local community.

Kim Larson with Oahe Habitat for Humanity is Executive Assistant for the CEO of BankWest in Pierre where she is instrumental in providing servicing on loans and facilitating the documentation for the partner families. Always available, Kim is able to keep Oahe Habitat representatives and the partner families informed. Kim has proven to be an integral part of the Oahe affiliate of Habitat for Humanity.

It gives me great pleasure to recognize Kim Larson and to congratulate her on receiving this well-earned award

and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

#### RECOGNIZING JERI LEMKE

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Jeri Lemke for receiving the Supporter of the Year Award from the South Dakota Habitat for Humanity. This is a prestigious award that reflects her hard work and dedication to eliminating poverty around the world. It is also a reflection of the valuable role she has played in giving back to her local community.

Jeri Lemke with Okiciyapi Tipi Habitat for Humanity has worked to increase Habitat's influence in her local community. She is always available to assist Habitat and provides helpful guidance. Okiciyapi Tipi, of the Eagle Butte community, has been transformed by Jeri and her fine leadership.

It gives me great pleasure to recognize Jeri Lemke and to congratulate her on receiving this well-earned award and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

#### RECOGNIZING LOYOLA ACADEMY

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Loyola Academy for receiving the Supporter of the Year Award from the South Dakota Habitat for Humanity. This is a prestigious award that reflects their hard work and dedication to eliminating poverty around the world. It is also a reflection of the valuable role they have played in giving back to their local community.

Loyola is a Jesuit High School in Wilmette, IL. They have a long-standing relationship with the Sicangu Tikanga Okiciyapi Habitat for Humanity. For 6 years, Loyola Academy has supported this affiliate, and this past year they provided three groups of volunteers. Loyola Academy's support has been instrumental in making progress in the area that is far reaching.

It gives me great pleasure to recognize Loyola Academy and to congratulate them on receiving this well-earned award and wish them continued success in the years to come.●

#### RECOGNIZING ARMOND 'RED' OLSON

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I wish to recognize Armond 'Red' Olson for receiving the Supporter of the Year Award from the South Dakota Habitat for Humanity. This is a prestigious award that reflects his hard work and dedication to eliminating poverty around the world. It is also a reflection of the valuable role he has played in giving back to his local community.

Armond Olson, known as Red, is with Dacotah Tipis Habitat for Humanity. He has served on the affiliate's Board of Directors for 2 years and has been a volunteer for every phase of the construction process. Since the beginning

of the Dacotah Tipis Habitat affiliate program, Red has been an ambitious and inspiring supporter. He is a family man, and has been married for 37 years and has 3 children and 10 grandchildren.

It gives me great pleasure to recognize Armond 'Red' Olson and to congratulate him on receiving this well-earned award and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

#### RECOGNIZING LARRY PETERSON

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Larry Peterson for receiving the Supporter of the Year Award from the South Dakota Habitat for Humanity. This is a prestigious award that reflects his hard work and dedication to eliminating poverty around the world. It is also a reflection of the valuable role he has played in giving back to his local community.

Larry Peterson is a valued volunteer with the Wiohanble Yuwita Habitat for Humanity. In Lakota, Wiohanble Yuwita translates into "Building Dreams" and Larry plays a vital role in building these dreams for the Habitat for Humanity recipients.

It gives me great pleasure to recognize Larry Peterson and to congratulate him on receiving this well-earned award and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

#### THRIVENT AID FOR LUTHERANS

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Thrivent Aid for Lutherans for receiving the Supporter of the Year Award from the South Dakota Habitat for Humanity. This is a prestigious award that reflects their hard work and dedication to eliminating poverty around the world. It is also a reflection of the valuable role they have played in giving back to their local community.

Thrivent Aid for Lutherans is partnered with the Brookings Area Habitat for Humanity. With the support of innumerable meals and volunteer support, Thrivent, as well as all Lutheran churches in Brookings, has been responsible for great gains in Habitat goals. They have even enlisted the support of Lutheran churches outside of the county. Over the past year, two homes were funded and constructed using Thrivent resources. This continued support has greatly expanded the success of the Brookings Area Habitat for Humanity.

It gives me great pleasure to recognize Thrivent Aid for Lutherans and to congratulate them on receiving this well-earned award and wish them continued success in the years to come.●

#### RECOGNIZING OKICIIYAPI TIPI

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Okiciyapi Tipi for receiving the Supporter of the Year Award from the South Dakota Habitat