

Pinnacles is home to 20 endemic species holding special Federal or State status, and is also the ancestral home range of the California condor. Pinnacles is the only National Park site that releases and maintains this extremely endangered bird species and is critical to the overall condor recovery effort. Pinnacles is also located within the Pacific Flyway migratory route and contains the highest concentration of nesting prairie falcons of any national park in the country.

Only 100 miles from the urban centers of San Francisco and San Jose, Pinnacles National Monument remains a haven of solitude for nature enthusiasts and offers a stunning reflection of California's rural history and heritage. For 100 years, Pinnacles National Monument has served as a recreational escape for hikers, outdoor enthusiasts, and those seeking a glimpse of California's rich history. It is a powerful reminder of the beauty of nature and the importance of conservation efforts.

I commend the National Park Service staff and volunteers for maintaining the natural beauty and historical significance of Pinnacles National Monument. I look forward to future generations having the opportunity to study and enjoy this unique piece of our State and national history for another 100 years.●

LEADERSHIP AT KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

● Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I wish today to applaud my alma mater, Kansas State University, and three of its students. Recently, three Kansas State University students and a student from the University of Delaware teamed up to win first place in a student case study competition at the ninth annual International Leadership Association conference in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Members of the winning team from Kansas State were Chance Lee, senior in sociology and political science with a minor in leadership studies, Manhattan, KS; Lauren Luhrs, senior in human ecology and mass communications-public relations with minors in leadership studies and business, Overland Park, KS; and Anthony Carter, senior in sociology with a minor in nonprofit leadership, Colorado Springs, CO.

The Leadership Studies Minor at Kansas State University has been a tremendous success. The mission of the Leadership Studies at Kansas State University is to develop knowledgeable, ethical, caring, inclusive leaders for a diverse and changing world. Mr. President, this program is doing just that. I am proud of this program, my alma matter, and the three students who represented Kansas State University so well.

In the competition participating teams were given a 23-page document from the Harvard Business School which detailed specifics for leadership

development at Goldman Sachs. The document provided key details for the case study, including the purpose of the leadership development program to be created. It also gave six factors that were essential in the design of the program: form and location, faculty, content and format, method, target audience, and governance and sponsorship.

I again congratulate these three students for their success.●

TRIBUTE TO CHARLES M. EVERS

● Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I am honored to publicly recognize an Idahoan who has received one of our Nation's highest military honors, the Silver Star Medal. United States Marine Corps SSG Charles M. Evers, of Lewiston, ID, was awarded this medal for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action against the enemy while serving as Platoon Commander, 3d Platoon, India Company, 3d Battalion, 5th Marines, Regimental Combat Team, 1 Marine Expeditionary Force Forward in Support of Operation Iraqi Freedom from 8 June to 12 June 2006." Over the course of a 4-day firefight, Sergeant Evers led his platoon in withstanding and repulsing a platoon-sized enemy attack that, on the third day, included a massive truck bomb that burst through the entry control point at an observation post the Marines were defending. During this fight, approximately 60 well-trained insurgents attempted, but were unable to take the observation post held by Evers' 22 marines, a fight in which no Americans perished. Citing repeated decisive combat leadership under intense and sustained machine gun and small arms fire, General James T. Conway, Commandant of the Marine Corps, recognized Sergeant Evers' "resolve" and "refusal to submit to the enemy's will" in the Silver Star Medal Citation.

As you know, the Silver Star is the Nation's third highest combat medal behind the Medal of Honor and the Navy Cross, Distinguished Service Cross or Air Force Cross. Sergeant Evers' extraordinary achievement recognizes his unflinching commitment to our Nation, his fellow soldiers and the mission for which he was trained. Sergeant Evers' courage and skill rivals his humility: when given the Silver Star, he said, "I was just doing my job. I'm proud of my Marines. I led them and they did their job."

I am honored and proud to call Sergeant Evers a fellow Idahoan, and I thank him for his bravery, patriotism and commitment to and support of the military mission of the United States of America. Most of all, I thank him and his fellow Marines for continuing to defend my freedom and that of my family.●

HONORING OLIN SIMS

● Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, Wyoming lost a beloved member of its agricultural community this weekend to a

tragic accident. Olin Sims, a fourth generation rancher from McFadden, WY, and president of the National Association of Conservation Districts served his community with a great passion for conservation, agriculture, and family values. Olin provided this body with sound advice and testimony on a number of occasions regarding the natural resource needs of our Nation. Although his life ended early, his contributions to our State and Nation will never end. The good he has done will benefit generations to come. He did what all of us should strive to do—leave this world a better place. Diana and I offer our thoughts and prayers to the family, friends, and colleagues of Olin Sims.●

CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ARKANSAS

● Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, it is with the greatest pleasure that I rise today to honor the University of Central Arkansas for its 100th anniversary. The university is located in Conway, AR, which lies in the central part of my State.

The University of Central Arkansas began as the Arkansas State Normal School under the leadership of John James Doynes in 1907. In 1909, the first commencement ceremony was held to recognize 10 graduates. The school conferred its first baccalaureate degree in 1922 and was renamed Arkansas State Teachers College in 1925.

The school was renamed State College of Arkansas in 1967, but was granted university status and renamed as the University of Central Arkansas in 1975. Since then, UCA has continued to excel by establishing the State's first Honors College, joining the National Collegiate Athletic Association, NCAA, and beginning its first doctoral program in 1998. Currently, the University of Central Arkansas has more than 100 undergraduate courses of study, 33 master's degree programs, and 3 doctoral programs.

Arkansas has always made education a top priority and the University of Central Arkansas has a proud history of scholastic progress. The university is an integral part of the Arkansas community and the educational opportunities available provide graduates with the skills needed to succeed in today's workforce.

Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me today in congratulating the University of Central Arkansas on its 100th anniversary and in wishing the university another 100 years of success.●

MAINE MUTUAL GROUP INSURANCE COMPANY

● Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, today I recognize Maine Mutual Group Insurance Company, MMG, a premier regional property and casualty insurance company that continues to grow and flourish. I am particularly pleased that

MMG recently completed a major expansion of its headquarters this October.

Like many American success stories, MMG has humble roots. The company was founded in Houlton, ME, in 1897, by a group of local farmers who were concerned about the cost and limited availability of insurance in Aroostook County. In 1906, the company moved to Presque Isle, where it remains today. In 1968, the company changed its name when it merged with Maine Mutual Fire Insurance Company. It subsequently merged with United Mutual Insurance Company 10 years later. The company grew exponentially following these mergers, from a premium volume of under \$1 million in 1968, to over \$20 million by 1988, and over \$107 million by 2006.

Evolving from a modest local business to a regional force, MMG expanded into Vermont in 1981, New Hampshire in 1984, and Pennsylvania in 2006. In March 2002, the company restructured as a mutual holding company and adopted its present name. By 2006, MMG's policyholder surplus reached a record high of \$55.9 million, a 127-percent increase over the previous 5 years. And all the while, the company maintained its presence in Maine's northernmost county, Aroostook County, or "the County" as Mainers know it. The County finds itself hundreds of miles from urban and financial centers, and the fact that MMG remains in Aroostook County speaks volumes to its commitment to the community and people of this rural county.

Two months ago, MMG completed a \$5 million expansion of its headquarters in Presque Isle, adding 20,000 square feet to the facility and creating an additional 50 jobs. Anticipating further growth, the new headquarters can accommodate about 200 employees. The phenomenal growth is first and foremost attributable to the hard work ethic of the people in northern Maine and the company's outstanding leadership.

Additionally, in order to continue to grow its business, the company must retain additional investment, and thankfully, through the new markets tax credit, NMTC, Coastal Enterprises of Wiscasset, ME, will soon be enabled to make a sizeable investment in this company. The new markets tax credit program continues to promote investment and economic growth for rural communities throughout Maine. And that is why as a member of the Senate Committee on Finance, I fought for and successfully secured an extension of the NMTC through the end of 2008 to ensure this pivotal program wouldn't just expire at the end of this year—but continue. I am not stopping there, and I am in the process of fighting for another extension. The credit's impact on our State cannot be overstated. This expansion alone of a progressive, regional company in Maine Mutual Group reinforces the value and power of the New Markets Tax Credit in strengthening our communities, exemplifying the best that public-private cooperation can offer.

Maine Mutual Group's numerous achievements have not gone unnoticed. In 1991, the firm gained the Governor's Award for Business Excellence. More recently, MMG garnered the Maine Insurance Company of the Year Award in 2000 and 2005, and the New Hampshire Insurance Company of the Year Award in 2004. With all insurance companies operating within those States being eligible for the awards, it is particularly impressive that MMG bested larger national competitors several times over the last decade.

In 2007, MMG was rated the top performer on Deep Customer Connections Inc.'s Ease of Doing Business survey. In this survey, more than 8,000 independent agents and brokers assessed the performance of over 220 property and casualty carriers, by comparing them in areas such as underwriting responsiveness and promptness in handling claims, as well as providing effective technology. In addition, MMG was ranked the number one medium-sized company in Maine on the "Best Places to Work in Maine" list this year.

I congratulate MMG on a job well done, and I look forward to watching its bright future unfold. As MMG continues building on recent achievements, it is well positioned to pursue new market opportunities in the years ahead. MMG is truly a valued member of our business community, and I am honored that it has served Maine so well.●

TRIBUTE TO JOHN MASSAUA

● Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, today I recognize a man who has gone above and beyond for the State of Maine and the country as a whole. On December 31 of this year, John Massaua will step down from his position as the State director for the Maine Small Business Development Centers, SBDCs.

John joined the Maine SBDC as State director just over 6 years ago, with a rare blend of private sector and non-profit experience. I remember learning about John's background as a founding officer of Staples and becoming excited at the prospect of what he could do for a program that had long under-achieved.

After more than 6 years as State director for the Maine SBDC, John's retirement will be a loss to Maine's 151,000 small businesses. For a program that counseled over 2,500 clients for more than 14,000 hours last year, replacing his leadership will prove to be a difficult challenge. John has demonstrated an unsurpassed dedication to his job, as reflected by the fact that the Maine SBDC returns \$3.30 annually to the Federal Government for each Federal dollar invested.

During John's tenure, the Maine SBDC achieved national recognition as an effective and worthwhile investment of taxpayer dollars. The Maine SBDC, which just celebrated its 30th anniversary, has helped create or retain 15,000 jobs and assisted 2,650 entrepreneurs in starting a business. Since its inception, the Maine SBDCs have provided one-

on-one counseling to over 42,000 entrepreneurs, including over 200,000 hours of direct assistance and 3,000 workshops and courses. There is no doubt in my mind that Maine's nationally recognized program came of age under John's tutelage, and I will always be thankful that he built something of which the State of Maine can be proud.

John's personal accomplishments and awards that the Maine SBDC received over the past 6 years are far too numerous to count—for example, during John's tenure he personally received the Thomas A. McGillicuddy Award for Excellence, the Maine SBDC was a recipient of the prestigious Margaret Chase Smith Quality Award, the Best of the Web Award, and in 2003 the Maine SBDC became only the fourth program in 4 years to earn the "T" designation from the Association of Small Business Development Centers. This national accreditation authorizes the Maine SBDC to formally provide technology support to Maine's small businesses and independent workers.

During the time that John was developing a program with a national reputation for regional excellence at the Maine SBDC, he also helped SBDCs on the national level through the Association of Small Business Development Centers, ASBDC. The ASBDC is an association which represents the collective interests of SBDCs throughout the country, and on numerous occasions John was selected to serve on their board and within its various committees.

Not only was John beneficial to Maine's small business communities, but he was a vital resource to me and my staff. I specifically remember one instance, when in 2005, John testified before the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship about the financial burden the 63 State, regional, and territorial SBDCs were under. As expected, John provided a well researched and persuasive argument as to why Congress should provide additional funds to this vital and successful program. Due in large part to John's testimony and dedicated activism, we are finally starting to see a commitment from Congress to provide more funds to the SBDC program. For this, John should always be remembered and duly credited.

The State of Maine and small businesses across the country owe a debt of gratitude to John Massaua for his work to protect and improve something as crucial as the Small Business Development Center program. Although he will be missed, I applaud John's years of commitment and hard work in providing entrepreneurs with the management and professional expertise required to achieve success. I sincerely hope that John and I can continue to work together ensuring that Maine maintains a leading role in assisting our Nation's most committed and creative small businesses.●