

The marchers in Newport included Robert Shaw, the father of Providence police Sergeant Steven Shaw, who was killed in the line of duty in 1994. Mr. Shaw has been an active leader of Concerns of Police Survivors, COPS, an organization that has provided so much support to the loved ones, families, and former comrades of fallen officers. I am pleased to have joined with Senator MURKOWSKI and other Senators on both sides of the aisle in cosponsoring a resolution recognizing the work of this organization and designating May 14, 2011, as National Police Survivors Day.

Last week, another group of Rhode Island police officers embarked on a longer march. Thirteen officers from Woonsocket marched for 4½ days in the 11th annual COPSwalk to Washington, under the leadership of Sergeant Ed Cunanan. Their dedication has raised thousands of dollars to provide financial support for the families of fallen police officers.

Once again, I thank the officers across Rhode Island and our country who protect our kids, secure our communities, and bring criminals to justice. They are public servants of the highest order who have given so much of themselves for the benefit of us all. I look forward to working with my colleagues to make sure we do all we can to protect their safety as they fulfill their vital responsibilities.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the thousands of peace officers who tirelessly serve our country and our communities. Having just commemorated Peace Officers Memorial Day on May 15, I want to specifically acknowledge the 162 officers killed in 2010, including 5 from my home State of Missouri, who laid down their lives in service to others.

This past week in our Nation's Capital thousands of police officers, deputy sheriffs, State troopers, investigators, and agents gathered in fellowship as brothers and sisters united by a bond of service and sacrifice. Every year, they gather to commemorate their fallen at the National Law Enforcement Officer Memorial where the names of nearly 19,000 officers who have been killed in the line of duty are etched. Nationally, the average age of the officers killed in 2010 was 41; the average length of their law enforcement service was nearly 12 years; and, on average, each officer left behind 2 children. While there is no way we can fully restore the families, the coworkers, and the communities of our fallen law enforcement professionals, we can offer solace and tribute in the hope that they know we honor them and their sacrifice.

The profession of a being a peace officer in this country is unique in many ways and its challenges are many. We expect our officers, deputies, troopers, agents, and investigators to uphold the law of the land without compromise and without blemish. We expect them to run toward the sounds of gunfire, to transform chaos into order, to provide

comfort to the afflicted and injured, to protect the vulnerable, and to facilitate justice for the victimized. We ask them to do this at every hour of the day, every day of the year, in every climate and place where the American flag flies. The most amazing thing is that our peace officers exceed every one of these expectations, and for this we remain eternally grateful.

Much like our military, peace officers are ordinary men and women who choose to answer a call to become extraordinary heroes. They are our moms, our dads, our brothers, our sisters, our neighbors, and our friends. Our peace officers understand duty before self. They understand what it means to miss holiday meals with their loved ones. They understand that long hours of calm may turn into moments of intense violence. They understand they are sentinels, standing in the gap between our loved ones and those who would do them harm.

In closing, I offer my humblest and sincerest gratitude to the families and loved ones of our wonderful peace officers. They, too understand sacrifice and commitment, and without their enduring support, the men and women behind the badge would not be able to accomplish all they do. To those who wear the badge and answer the call to serve, I humbly say thank you, and I ask my fellow Senators to join me in acknowledging them.

RECOGNIZING OUTDOOR GEAR EXCHANGE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today I wish to bring the attention of the Senate to a small business in Vermont, the Outdoor Gear Exchange, which is moving to a new location near and dear to my heart—the Church Street Marketplace in Burlington.

A large, national retailer recently chose to depart the Marketplace. This left a big hole on one of our nation's most successful pedestrian malls. The local owners of the Outdoor Gear Exchange, Marc Sherman and Mike Donahue, quickly took the opportunity to move their successful venture from a nearby side street onto Church Street.

As a longtime supporter of the Church Street Marketplace, I was pleased to see this locally owned and much-beloved fixture in the Vermont business scene fill one of the most high-profile store fronts on Church Street.

I hope Americans interested in good news during this difficult economy might take a moment to read about this great business, and I ask unanimous consent to have the May 16, 2011, Burlington Free Press article written by Dan D'Ambrosio entitled "Outdoor Gear Exchange takes its store, and philosophy, into a bigger space" printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Burlington Free Press, May 16, 2011]

OUTDOOR GEAR EXCHANGE TAKES ITS STORE, AND PHILOSOPHY, INTO A BIGGER SPACE

At the beginning of last week, Marc Sherman, co-owner of Outdoor Gear Exchange, sat in the empty, cavernous space on Church Street where he was moving his business—in the spot Old Navy used to occupy—and contemplated the grand opening of his new store approaching on Thursday.

Sitting surrounded by partially finished displays and unopened boxes of merchandise scattered about on the concrete floor, it was hard to believe. But Sherman and his crew of 65 full-time employees were determined to be ready for this week's ribbon cutting and remarks by Gov. Peter Shumlin. Sherman said the creation of his new store—at 15,000 square feet of retail space, twice the size of the old store on Cherry Street—cost more than \$100,000.

"All of my staff is running around putting this together," Sherman said last week. "Unlike most stores, we're not moving into a store, we're building our own. That increases everyone's commitment."

Sherman said he thinks of his staff as family, and said the rush to get the new store open has been exhilarating. He's proud to be, he says, the first local store in that prime space on Church Street in a very long time.

"I have the world's greatest staff," Sherman said. "Everyone is fun and enthusiastic. They're funny and smart. I love hanging out with them. They're all really active. To me that is the most important thing about what I do. I like the people I work with."

Sherman grew up in Englewood, N.J., moving to New York City after graduating from college to take a job crunching numbers for the marketing department of a manufacturing company, a job he remembers as "not particularly exciting."

On winter weekends, he would drive to Vermont to ski at Ludlow.

"I realized every weekend I wanted to go home to New York less and less," Sherman said. "I never had a bad experience in Vermont. I said, Why not stay here and visit New York? That was 19 years ago."

Sherman began his business with a friend in 1995 in an 800-square-foot space on Main Street, where Tonic is now. Their business plan was based on the fact that Sherman had more outdoor equipment than he knew what to do with, and his friend didn't have any.

"We wanted to connect people who have too much with people who have too little and make it affordable for them to get outside because, I'll be the first to say, the gear is expensive; the clothing is expensive," Sherman said.

Sherman quickly moved beyond consignments, settling on a three-tier model. Consignment items still make up about 8 percent of his business, all of it walk-in, but the bulk is in new clothing and gear plus seconds, close-outs and cosmetic blemishes. There are very few outdoors stores using this particular mix of product offerings, Sherman said.

"It's a model that's proven to work even if it doesn't always make sense," Sherman said. "Somebody is looking at a full-price backpack for \$450 next to somebody looking at a close-out backpack for \$250, next to somebody looking at a used backpack for \$150, and we sell to all of them. Some people want to spend more for what's out this year. Some people want to save a little. We have something for everybody."

Sherman also went his own way when it came to deciding what to stock.

"We felt if we opened a store that would focus on what consumers are looking for opposed to what manufacturers are generating,

we'd be successful," Sherman said. "We always tried to find gear our friends would buy, or that we would want to buy."

Outdoor Gear Exchange also does an online business account for 25 percent of its sales and growing, nearly doubling this year. Sherman was able to consolidate his online staff from where they were, in a space above The Body Shop on Church Street, to offices in his new space. Although he doesn't release sales figures, Sherman did say his annual payroll approaches \$1 million.

With all the extra space to work with in the new location, Sherman and co-owner Mike Donohue are getting into gear for family camping, also known as car camping, which will put them in competition with Dick's Sporting Goods in Williston. Traditionally, Outdoor Gear Exchange has focused on backpackers, climbers and hikers, "folks going out into the wilderness," Sherman said, and who place a high value on lightweight gear.

But Sherman said family camping is a growing segment of the market, especially for people his age—45 years old. It's not inexpensive to get into, but once you're set up, it is a relatively cheap vacation. The priorities for the gear are different than those for hikers and climbers.

"Car camping is a little more focused on amenities and space, as opposed to weight," Sherman said. "We'll offer tents with more features oriented toward cushy living, thicker sleeping pads, things like that."

Sherman also plans to expand his offering of casual outdoor clothing to include lower price ranges than he has historically stocked, in memory of the recently departed Old Navy.

"We're sensitive to the fact that Old Navy provided a service to folks who couldn't afford more expensive clothing," Sherman said. "Whether it was high quality or not, the bottom line is it was highly affordable. We want to make sure that doesn't become a void in the downtown, so we'll look for outdoor casual that's more affordable than what we currently sell."

Eventually, Sherman plans to add another 8,000 square feet of retail space in the basement of his new space, which he is also leasing. Panera Bread, the national chain of bakery-cafes, will also be on the main floor of the building as the only other tenant, although there will be no physical connection between the two businesses. Panera isn't expected to open for another month or two.

"I hope we get some bread smell, but that's about it," Sherman said.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO BILL GIPSON

• Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, Bill Gipson, president and chief executive officer of Empire District Electric Company, is retiring on May 31, 2011. Bill is an example of the American dream: humble beginnings, hardworking, successful and modest.

Bill, a native of Jasper County, MO, worked his way through Missouri Southern State University earning a degree in management technology. He went to work at Empire in 1981. He was director of the utility's commercial operations and economic development departments before becoming executive vice-president in 2001 and then chief operating officer. Bill has been a member of Empire's board of directors and has served as president and chief executive

officer since 2002. During Bill's tenure as president, Empire District Electric Company's assets have doubled.

Involvement in the community has been one of Bill's trademarks. Bill is a past chairman of the Joplin Chamber of Commerce, the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and the Missouri Energy Development Association. Additionally, Bill is on the Missouri Southern State University School of Business Advisory Council, the Missouri Southern State University Foundation and a member of Rotary International.

At their annual banquet on May 5, 2011, the Joplin Chamber of Commerce named Bill the Outstanding Citizen of the Year.

Bill and his wife of 33 years, Tracy, are looking forward to their retirement home on Table Rock Lake, but I know Bill Gipson's contributions to Missouri will continue for years to come. ●

NORTH CAROLINA VETERANS PARK

• Mr. BURR. Mr. President, today I join with the citizens of North Carolina who have a long and proud history since the Nation's birth of paying special honor and respect to its sons and daughters who protect our country's freedoms. Americans from coast to coast enjoy their freedoms because of the service and sacrifices of our veterans. North Carolina is proud to be the home of Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station, Charlotte Air National Guard, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City, Fort Bragg, Pope Army Air Field, Marine Corps Air Station New River, and Seymour Johnson Air Force Base. We are proud to be a state that one of the largest populations of veterans in the United States call home.

North Carolina has a rich military history dating back to before the Revolutionary War. In a 1771 rebellion against the royal governor, North Carolina farmers called "Regulators" employed tactics at Alamance Battleground that were later adopted as a model for fighting the British. Troops from North Carolina played a significant role in many Civil War battles, including the Battle of Gettysburg, where "Tar Heels" were prominent in Pickett's Charge. Many of the 86,000 North Carolinians who served in World War I were assigned to the 30th Infantry Division, which distinguished itself in the Somme Offensive by breaking through the famed and supposedly impregnable "Hindenburg Line," helping to hasten the end of the conflict. During World War II, the U.S. Marine Corps trained their first class of African Americans at Montford Point Base, near Camp Lejeune, and members of the North Carolina National Guard landed on the Normandy beaches. During the war in Southeast Asia soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division at Ft. Bragg deployed to participate in the Tet Offensive and remained in theater

for 22 months. Airmen flying F-15E's from the 4th Fighter Wing out of Seymour Johnson Air Force Base were the first to lead nighttime strikes against Iraqi forces during Operation Desert Storm and helped bring the Persian Gulf war to a swift conclusion. Elements of the 2nd Marine Division from Camp Lejeune crossed into Iraq on the first day of the ground war in Operation Iraqi Freedom and later forged relationships with the Sunni tribes in Iraq's restive Anbar Province. Elite Green Berets from Fort Bragg have been operating throughout Afghanistan, expanding Village Stability Operations and seeking out terrorist leaders. And members of the Coast Guard's National Strike Force based in Elizabeth City responded to the devastating earthquakes in Haiti by conducting facility inspections around crippled Haitian ports to help resume the vital supply of aid to that poverty stricken nation.

This Fourth of July will hold special significance for North Carolina. On that day in Fayetteville, NC home to Fort Bragg, where the renowned 82nd Airborne, Eighteenth Airborne Corps, U.S. Army's Special Operations Command, and Pope Army Airfield are located, there will be a dedication of the North Carolina Veterans Park. The purpose of the Veterans Park is to honor all North Carolina veterans and serve as a centerpiece for a compilation of historic objects and images and landscaped spaces that symbolize a Nation's unending gratitude, somber reflection, and ongoing education for generations to come. It will commemorate the achievement, service, dedication, and sacrifice of our Armed Forces.

The park is adjacent to the Airborne and Special Operations Museum, which is a part of the U.S. Army Museum System, providing an exceptional educational experience and preserving the legacy of airborne and special operations forces from their early days in World War Two to the present operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and across the globe.

The city of Fayetteville has directed that the design and construction of the North Carolina Veterans Park meet or exceed all the guidelines and expectations provided by a large representative segment of the veteran population, including members of a content committee who served in all five branches of the military services: Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Air Force.

The Park consists of seven water features and public art crafted by individuals from across the State. The hands of 100 veterans were cast to honor and represent every county in North Carolina and are displayed in this park's Wall of Oath. Soil from each of the State's 100 counties will be included in the construction of the columns in the park. The sculptures in the public plaza signify our veterans' commitment, courage, dedication, heroism,