

Not once, in nearly 20 years of production, has there ever been a report of e.coli or other food-borne illness resulting from finely textured lean beef. It is safe, healthy and only being vilified because someone thought it might win them an award.

It is my hope that the American people will not be so easily fooled in the future, and will explore the facts for themselves, rather than allowing a news organization, on a crusade to win awards, take down a safe, successful company providing good jobs for hundreds of Americans.

HONORING MS. JENNIFER VALOPPI

HON. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2012

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate Women's History Month, I rise today to honor Ms. Jennifer Valoppi, an outstanding individual and leader in South Florida.

Ms. Valoppi is a multi-Emmy Award winning TV journalist, award winning author and social entrepreneur. Ms. Valoppi is the President and Co-Founder of the Women of Tomorrow Mentor and Scholarship Program (WOT), a unique mentoring organization that helps young at-risk women live up to their full potential. She is currently engaged in expanding WOT nationally to inspire and motivate women across the nation. Through Ms. Valoppi's leadership, WOT has received national recognition and has been the focus of study by the Harvard Business School Community Partners Program.

As lead anchor at NBC 6 WTVJ in Miami, Ms. Valoppi covered historic moments including the 2000 Presidential election, the Elian Gonzalez saga, the Versace Murder, the Olympics, and California's Northridge earthquake. She also took a leading role in driving the stations commitment to fair, accurate, and balanced journalism.

Both Ms. Valoppi and her husband, Christian Berdouare have made tremendous contributions to our community and are highly admired for their hard work. Ms. Valoppi is a recipient of Florida Jeb Bush's Points of Light Award, the highest honor in Florida. She was named a Heavy Hitter in Non-Profit by the South Florida Business Journal. She has also been awarded the "Inner Circle of 12 Distinction" from the American Cancer Society and the "Woman of Impact Award" from the Women's History Coalition, among many other awards and recognitions.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to pay tribute to Ms. Jennifer Valoppi for her continued service to the South Florida community and I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing a dear friend and an exemplary individual.

TRIBUTE TO PATRICK
PALMERSHEIM

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2012

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and recognize Patrick

Palmersheim for being awarded the Medal of Honor from the Iowa State Daughters of the American Revolution.

Daughters of the American Revolution was founded in 1890 and incorporated by Congress in 1896 as a national volunteer organization committed to encouraging patriotism and promoting American ideals through better education for our nation's children. Nationwide, DAR boasts more than 170,000 members from 3,000 chapters across all 50 states in addition to various international chapters as well.

The most prestigious honor awarded by Daughters of the American Revolution is the DAR Medal of Honor. To receive this prestigious award, one must be a native born American who has shown an extraordinary commitment to the qualities of service, leadership, trustworthiness and, of course, patriotism. DAR Medal of Honor recipients are recognized for making lasting contributions to our American heritage through selfless service to their country, state, community and fellow man.

Accordingly, Mr. Palmersheim has been serving Iowans his entire career. Patrick served nine years in our nation's Air Force before civically serving in his rural Iowa community through his roles on the city council, as a volunteer firefighter, and as mayor. In 2002, he was appointed Executive Director of the Iowa Commission of Veterans Affairs by then Governor Tom Vilsack. Patrick's leadership in his new role directly led to Iowa becoming the first state in the U.S. to pass legislation that allowed nursing homes the opportunity to report their residents for potential eligibility for federal benefits from the Veterans Administration. Mr. Palmersheim was also instrumental in establishing the long-desired Iowa Veterans Cemetery, which has provided a final resting place for 80,000 veterans since its groundbreaking in November of 2006.

Mr. Speaker, what Mr. Palmersheim has done for the state of Iowa and our veterans cannot be understated. He is truly the benchmark for which this prestigious award is bestowed. It is an honor to represent Patrick and all of Iowa's veterans in the United States Congress and I trust my colleagues in the House will rise to join me in congratulating Patrick for all he has done.

HONORING DONALD JONES, JASON
BOWMASTER, AND DANIEL
DIMATTEO

HON. TIM GRIFFIN

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2012

Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor three Arkansas heroes.

Jacksonville Fire Department Captain Donald Jones and Engineer Jason Bowmaster along with Jacksonville Police Officer Daniel DiMatteo were struck by a van while responding to an accident on Monday, March 19th.

Engineer Bowmaster and Officer DiMatteo are in stable condition.

However, tragically, Captain Jones, a 31-year veteran of the department, passed away as a result of his injuries. He is the first member of the Jacksonville Fire Department to be killed in the line of duty.

Captain Jones served the last years of his career with Station 4 and is survived by his wife, Betty, his five children, three brothers, nine grandchildren, and one great-grandson.

Every day across the nation, our first responders put their lives on the line, sacrificing to keep us safe in our communities.

And, these three men were doing just that: serving and protecting their communities.

I honor them for their service to Jacksonville, and I keep them and their families in my prayers as they recover from this tragic accident.

HONORING MARCUS SCHMIDT

HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2012

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Marcus Schmidt of the Centralia High School Wrestling team for winning the Class 1 Missouri State Wrestling Championship in the 120-pound weight class.

Mr. Schmidt and his coaches should be commended for all their hard work throughout the regular season and for bringing home the state title in the Class 1 120-pound weight class to his school and community. This is his fourth state medal and second consecutive Class 1 championship.

I ask that you join me in recognizing Mr. Schmidt for a job well done!

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY
OF BRANSON, MISSOURI

HON. BILLY LONG

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2012

Mr. LONG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize world-famous Branson, Missouri. This year, Branson celebrates 100 years of heritage, harmony, and hospitality. Branson is a community of people, shaped and inspired by the lakes and hills that surround her, with a common mission, united in perseverance and service to others.

Over the past 100 years, millions of people from around the world have enjoyed and appreciated this special location in Ozark Mountain Country. However, it wasn't always this way, as Branson comes from humble beginnings.

In 1882, a community was founded when a young schoolteacher named Reuben Branson built a store and opened the first post office in a rural area of southwest Missouri. Branson continued to grow, helped by steamboats and the White River Railroad arriving in 1906, and Branson was officially incorporated on April 1, 1912.

In 1907, preacher Harold Bell Wright wrote a best-selling book, "Shepherd of the Hills," which led to an attraction still thriving today. Inspired entrepreneurs kept arriving and in 1949, Hugo Herschend signed a 99-year lease on a cave and went on to build Silver Dollar City. In 1959, Branson's distinction as a music destination began when the Mabe brothers opened the first music show. The Presley family opened the town's second music show on what eventually became Missouri Route 76.

Today, Branson entertains millions of visitors who embrace the city's heritage, harmony and hospitality. I am proud to have the city and the community of Branson in my district and I congratulate them on the past 100 years and I look forward to 100 more.

**HONORING RIPLEY BLACKWELL
HEAD START CENTER**

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2012

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Ripley Blackwell Head Start Center, Inc. The center was named in honor of two civil rights pioneers, Mrs. Minnie Ripley, and Mrs. Unita Blackwell, the first African-American elected as the Mayor of Mayersville, Mississippi, in 1976. The center was originally known as the Friends of Children of Mississippi, until 1980 when they adopted the name of Ripley Blackwell Head Start Center. The center serves both Sharkey and Issaquena counties in the Mississippi Delta. The center's mission is to educate the children of Sharkey & Issaquena counties as well as serving their families.

The Ripley Blackwell Head Start became a valuable part of the community by addressing the barriers that hindered growth and development, and the nurturing of a community bond. The area director, Mr. Roger Robinson, was instrumental in convincing the school board to purchase an old high school for the growth and expansion and all the amenities needed to accommodate the center.

In the beginning the center served 180 children and their families with nine units. Currently, Ripley Blackwell Head Start serves 111 children and their families with six units. They have successfully transitioned over 5,558 children into the public schools of Sharkey and Issaquena counties.

For over 30 years the Ripley Blackwell Head Start Center has prepared children to enter kindergarten confidently with the social, physical, emotional, and cognitive skills and competencies necessary for continued school success. Mr. Speaker, I ask our colleagues to join in recognizing the Ripley Blackwell Head Start Center, Inc. for their commitment to educating the community.

**TRIBUTE TO MARK HENRY
FARLINGER**

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2012

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Mark Farlinger of Cresco for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout.

The Eagle Scout rank is the highest advancement rank in scouting. Only about five percent of Boy Scouts earn the Eagle Scout Award. The award is a performance-based achievement with high standards that have been well-maintained over the years.

To earn the Eagle Scout rank, a Boy Scout is obligated to pass specific tests that are organized by requirements and merit badges, as

well as completing an Eagle Project to benefit the community. Mark's project was to construct a kiosk and a welcome sign to assist the visitors of Vernon Springs Park in Howard County. The work ethic Mark has shown in this project, and every other project leading up to his Eagle Scout rank, speaks volumes of his commitment to serving a cause greater than himself and assisting his community.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by this young man and his supportive family demonstrates the rewards of hard work, dedication and perseverance. I am honored to represent Mark and his family in the United States Congress. I know that all of my colleagues in the House will join me in congratulating him in obtaining the Eagle Scout ranking, and will wish him continued success in his future education and career.

**IN HONOR OF CHIEF STEPHEN
WHITE**

HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2012

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Doylestown Township's Chief of Police, Mr. Stephen White, who on March 2nd 2012 retired after a 40-year career in law enforcement. For Chief White, public service runs in the family. Steve's grandfather was a prominent Philadelphia police officer for a number of years, which truly inspired him to pursue a career path in law enforcement. After earning a bachelor's degree in international relations from St. Joseph's University, White started his career by working for the Capitol Police in the Nation's Capital.

On February 16th 1974, Steve White settled in Bucks County and began what would be a distinguished career, first working as a patrolman for Doylestown Township. He quickly moved up in the ranks and was promoted to Sergeant the following year. After three years of hard work and dedication to the force, he became a lieutenant, and on January 12th 1988 Steve was promoted to Chief of Police, where he remained until this year. As Chief, he served as the Township's Emergency Management Coordinator, flawlessly supervising a staff of 21 officers and 3 civilians with a budget of just over \$3 million.

Over the course of his career, Chief White has received numerous honors and awards. He was inducted into the International Police Association's Hall of Fame in 1999, and was named an extraordinary Member in August 2007 by the FBI National Academy Associates. Previously, he served as President of the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association.

Chief White has devoted his life to making his community a safer and better place to live. I am honored to speak on his behalf today, and I am proud to be his representative in Congress. I wish Steve many years of continued success.

COMMEMORATING THE INDUCTION
OF PHILIP P. SMITH INTO NOVA
SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY'S
2012 ENTREPRENEUR HALL OF
FAME

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 29, 2012

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an exceptional entrepreneur and my dear friend, Philip P. Smith. As the president and chief executive officer of Phil Smith Management, Inc., he is better known as the founder of Phil Smith Chevrolet, a successful General Motors (GM) dealership in my Congressional district that serves the greater South Florida area from Palm Beach to Broward and Miami-Dade Counties. On April 18, 2012, Phil will be inducted into the 2012 Entrepreneur Hall of Fame at the H. Wayne Huizenga School of Business and Entrepreneurship at Nova Southeastern University (NSU) for his longstanding business leadership and community involvement.

The NSU Entrepreneur Hall of Fame was established in 1990 to honor the lifetime achievements of outstanding entrepreneurs who contributed not only to the growth of a phenomenal entrepreneurial business, but have also demonstrated a willingness to contribute time, effort, and financial resources to programs and activities that enhance the quality of life in the communities in which they live. For more than 30 years, Phil has been serving the South Florida community as a business leader and philanthropist. His first equity venture was in a Toyota dealership in Homestead, Florida in 1980. With a direct hands-on sales and management approach, Phil has since built his organization from the ground up and now operates 14 auto dealerships throughout Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina.

Phil is responsible for the overall operations of Phil Smith Management, Inc., including working with the equity partners at all locations and orchestrating its acquisitions and growth strategies. Thanks to entrepreneurs like him, GM has again become the world's top-selling automaker. Phil Smith Chevrolet has consistently ranked as one of the top dealerships in Broward County in a variety of GM categories, including customer satisfaction, service, and vehicle fleet and GM parts sales. Furthermore, in recent years, Phil Smith Chevrolet has proven to be a true economic linchpin to distressed areas in Broward County. Phil takes great pride in the fact that most of his 104 employees have worked for the dealership for many years and live in and have strong relationships with the surrounding community.

The Phil Smith Automotive Group has received numerous awards, including the J.D. Powers Quality Dealer Award, Toyota President's Award, Ford Chairman's Award, and Acura Dealership of Distinction recognition. Phil is also past chairman of the Southeast Toyota Dealer Council, a past member of the National Toyota Dealer Council, past president of the South Florida Auto-Truck Dealers Association, and a past director of the Florida Automobile Dealers Association.

Raised in South Florida, Phil is well-known for his civic and charitable involvement. He is actively involved with the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Humane Society of Broward County,