

my work across four decades representing Iowa in Congress. I take pride in accomplishments that have been national in scope—for instance, passing the Americans with Disabilities Act and spearheading successful farm bills. But I take a very special pride in projects that have made a big difference in local communities across my State.

Today, I would like to give an accounting of my work with leaders and residents of O'Brien County to build a legacy of a stronger local economy, better schools and educational opportunities, and a healthier, safer community.

Between 2001 and 2013, the creative leadership in your community has worked with me to successfully acquire financial assistance from programs I have fought hard to support, which have provided more than \$9.4 million to the local economy.

Of course my favorite memory of working together has to be our shared commitment to improving firefighter safety.

Among the highlights:

**School grants:** Every child in Iowa deserves to be educated in a classroom that is safe, accessible, and modern. That is why, for the past decade and a half, I have secured funding for the innovative Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program—better known among educators in Iowa as Harkin grants for public schools construction and renovation. Across 15 years, Harkin grants worth more than \$132 million have helped school districts to fund a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools. In many cases, these Federal dollars have served as the needed incentive to leverage local public and private dollars, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect within a school district. Over the years, O'Brien County has received \$711,622 in Harkin grants. Similarly, schools in O'Brien County have received funds that I designated for Iowa Star Schools for technology totaling \$112,952.

**Agricultural and rural development:** Because I grew up in a small town in rural Iowa, I have always been a loyal friend and fierce advocate for family farmers and rural communities. I have been a member of the House or Senate Agriculture Committee for 40 years—including more than 10 years as chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Across the decades, I have championed farm policies for Iowans that include effective farm income protection and commodity programs; strong, progressive conservation assistance for agricultural producers; renewable energy opportunities; and robust economic development in our rural communities. Since 1991, through various programs authorized through the farm bill, O'Brien County has received more than \$3.7 million from a variety of farm bill programs.

Keeping Iowa communities safe: I also firmly believe that our first re-

sponders need to be appropriately trained and equipped, able to respond to both local emergencies and to statewide challenges such as, for instance, the methamphetamine epidemic. Since 2001, O'Brien County's fire departments have received over \$996,000 for firefighter safety and operations equipment.

**Disability Rights:** Growing up, I loved and admired my brother Frank, who was deaf. But I was deeply disturbed by the discrimination and obstacles he faced every day. That is why I have always been a passionate advocate for full equality for people with disabilities. As the primary author of the Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA, and the ADA Amendments Act, I have had four guiding goals for our fellow citizens with disabilities: equal opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self-sufficiency. Nearly a quarter century since passage of the ADA, I see remarkable changes in communities everywhere I go in Iowa—not just in curb cuts or closed captioned television, but in the full participation of people with disabilities in our society and economy, folks who at long last have the opportunity to contribute their talents and to be fully included. These changes have increased economic opportunities for all citizens of O'Brien County, both those with and without disabilities. And they make us proud to be a part of a community and country that respects the worth and civil rights of all of our citizens.

This is at least a partial accounting of my work on behalf of Iowa, and specifically O'Brien County, during my time in Congress. In every case, this work has been about partnerships, cooperation, and empowering folks at the State and local level, including in O'Brien County, to fulfill their own dreams and initiatives. And, of course, this work is never complete. Even after I retire from the Senate, I have no intention of retiring from the fight for a better, fairer, richer Iowa. I will always be profoundly grateful for the opportunity to serve the people of Iowa as their Senator. ●

#### PALO ALTO COUNTY, IOWA

● **Mr. HARKIN.** Mr. President, the strength of my State of Iowa lies in its vibrant local communities, where citizens come together to foster economic development, make smart investments to expand opportunity, and take the initiative to improve the health and well-being of residents. Over the decades, I have witnessed the growth and revitalization of so many communities across my State. And it has been deeply gratifying to see how my work in Congress has supported these local efforts.

I have always believed in accountability for public officials, and this, my final year in the Senate, is an appropriate time to give an accounting of my work across four decades rep-

resenting Iowa in Congress. I take pride in accomplishments that have been national in scope—for instance, passing the Americans with Disabilities Act and spearheading successful farm bills. But I take a very special pride in projects that have made a big difference in local communities across my State.

Today, I would like to give an accounting of my work with leaders and residents of Palo Alto County to build a legacy of a stronger local economy, better schools and educational opportunities, and a healthier, safer community.

Between 2001 and 2013, the creative leadership in your community has worked with me to secure funding in Palo Alto County worth over \$1 million and successfully acquired financial assistance from programs I have fought hard to support, which have provided more than \$116 million to the local economy.

Of course my favorite memory of working together has to be working with the community to support the Iowa Lakes Community College. I am especially pleased with the college's work on sustainable energy.

Among the highlights:

**Investing in Iowa's economic development through targeted community projects:** In Northwest Iowa, we have worked together to grow the economy by making targeted investments in important economic development projects including improved roads and bridges, modernized sewer and water systems, and better housing options for residents of Palo Alto County. In many cases, I have secured Federal funding that has leveraged local investments and served as a catalyst for a whole ripple effect of positive, creative changes. For example, working with mayors, city council members, and local economic development officials in Palo Alto County, I have fought for funding for Iowa Lakes Community College projects worth over \$3.7 million, helping to create jobs and expand economic opportunities.

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that I designated for Iowa Star Schools for technology totaling \$149,500.

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Keeping Iowa communities safe: I also firmly believe that our first responders need to be appropriately trained and equipped, able to respond to both local emergencies and to statewide challenges such as, for instance, the methamphetamine epidemic. Since 2001, Palo Alto County's fire departments have received over \$585,120 for firefighter safety and operations equipment.

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Between 2001 and 2013, the creative leadership in your community has worked with me to secure funding in Pocahontas County worth over \$225,000 and successfully acquired financial assistance from programs I have fought hard to support, which have provided more than \$5.4 million to the local economy.

Of course my favorite memory of working together has to be their tremendous use of farm bill funds that I authorized for a variety of local projects, including construction of a daycare, fire department improvements, sewer improvements, courthouse improvements, and conservation.

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Keeping Iowa communities safe: I also firmly believe that our first responders need to be appropriately trained and equipped, able to respond to both local emergencies and to statewide challenges such as, for instance, the methamphetamine epidemic. Since 2001, Pocahontas County's fire departments have received over \$390,245 for firefighter safety and operations equipment.

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