

the important role the Veterans of Foreign Wars plays for combat veterans and military servicemembers from the active, Guard, and Reserve forces. This distinguished national group of veterans has been a constant influence, furthering the voice of all of our Nation's heroes. On July 22, 2014, at the 115th National Convention, David Sousa was elected Nevada Department Commander. Commander Sousa has served and held many roles within the Veterans of Foreign Wars organization for the past 10 years and has previously been named the VFW Outstanding Veteran for 2006. His work for the VFW is exemplary, and I expect great things from him as he assumes his role as Nevada's Department Commander.

Commander Sousa's focus of his work for this year is suicide prevention and awareness for veterans, as well as working towards a safer community for veterans. I commend Commander Sousa on this important goal and look forward to working with him to achieve this. As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I recognize that Congress has a responsibility not only to honor these brave individuals who serve our Nation but also to ensure they are cared for when they return home. I am concerned about the needs of Nevada's veterans, especially those suffering one of the most common injuries from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars—post-traumatic stress. I believe Congress has a responsibility to enact policies that will help veterans overcome these difficulties and ensure that the Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs have the resources necessary to meet the growing needs of Nevada and our Nation's veteran communities. I remain committed to upholding this promise for our veterans and servicemembers in Nevada and throughout the Nation.

I am both humbled and honored by Commander Sousa's service and am proud to call him a fellow Nevadan. Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Commander Sousa for all of his accomplishments and wish him well in all of his future endeavors.●

RECOGNIZING WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT'S AIR NATIONAL GUARD

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize and congratulate the Washoe County School District's Air National Guard for receiving the Secretary of Defense Freedom Award.

Former Secretary of Defense, William Perry, developed the Secretary of Defense Freedom Award under the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve office in 1996. Each year, up to 15 awards are presented to employers in three categories: large business, small business, and the public sector. The award honors employers who have shown exceptional support to their Guard and Reserve employees and have gone above and beyond what is feder-

ally mandated to ensure that their military employees are well taken care of. This esteemed award is the highest in a series of Department of Defense employer awards, and I congratulate Washoe County School District's Air National Guard on being selected as one of only 190 employers to receive this award.

Washoe County School District's Air National Guard's extraordinary level of support they provide to their servicemembers is admirable, and I am both humbled and honored to acknowledge Washoe County School District's Air National Guard here today. During deployment, the school district takes the time to send emails and care packages to our brave men and women. Its support services also extend to the members' families. Washoe County teachers volunteer their own time to help children and spouses who are in need of assistance by babysitting, housecleaning, and running errands. The school district has also been commended for the support it showed after a fellow Guardsman and teacher, Michael Landsberry, was killed defending students during a shooting at Sparks Middle School last year.

Each and every day, our troops are serving the United States to protect the freedoms we enjoy today. They dedicate their lives to serve this great Nation and constantly make grave sacrifices to ensure the safety of our country. Our servicemembers and their families deserve our gratitude and thanks, and as a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I am committed to keeping our Nation's promise to care for them. There is no way to adequately thank the men and women that lay down their lives for our freedoms, but Washoe County School District's Air National Guard has shown an unwavering dedication and commitment to ensuring that our servicemembers and their families are getting the support that they deserve.

I ask my colleagues and all Nevadans to join me in congratulating Washoe County School District's Air National Guard and know that they serve as an example for the rest of the Silver State.●

RECOGNIZING VETERAN'S VILLAGE

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize Veteran's Village in Las Vegas, NV, for its commitment and dedication to providing our veterans with transitional and permanent housing. Veteran's Village is the only 24-hour, 7-day-a-week social service facility for veterans in Las Vegas.

The brave men and women who served the United States and fought to protect our freedom have often come home to a struggling economy. A number of veterans are unable to find a job or afford to buy or rent a home. As the demographics of our Armed Forces have changed throughout the years, so too have the needs of homeless vet-

erans. As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, this is an issue I have been personally involved with and have introduced legislation to address. Organizations like the Veteran's Village serve to help those in need in an environment of respect and dignity within the Las Vegas community. This organization is a shining example of the kind of initiatives that will help get our veterans back on their feet.

There is no way to adequately thank the men and women that lay down their lives for our freedoms, but the Founders and volunteers at the Veteran's Village are working to assist our Nation's veterans by giving them shelter while they try to rebuild their lives. The organization was founded by Dr. Arnold Stalk, who envisioned turning the old Econo Lodge into a facility to house our homeless veterans. With the help of public and private collaborative partnerships, Veteran's Village has created a home environment for our Nation's heroes who need a helping hand. This organization's continued dedication to serving veterans through providing skills training, nutrition, employment training and referrals, continuing education and degree programs, medical services, mental health counseling and much more is commendable, and I am proud to honor this organization here today.

As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I know the struggles that our veterans face after returning home from the battlefield. Congress has a responsibility not only to honor these brave individuals, but to ensure they receive the quality care they have earned and deserve. I remain committed to upholding this promise for our veterans and servicemembers in Nevada and throughout the Nation. I am very pleased that veterans' service organizations like the Veteran's Village are committed to ensuring that the needs of our veterans are being met.

Today, I ask my colleagues and all Nevadans to join me in recognizing the Veteran's Village, an organization whose mission is both noble and charitable. I am both humbled and honored to acknowledge the Veteran's Village and its work to end homelessness for veterans throughout the United States, and I wish it the best of luck in all of its future endeavors.●

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LAURIUM MANOR INN

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I acknowledge the 25th anniversary of the Laurium Manor Inn in Houghton County, MI, which was celebrated on September 14, 2014. I extend my heartiest congratulations to Dave and Julie Sprenger, who purchased a vacant historic mansion 25 years ago with the intention of opening a bed and breakfast. The Sprenger's vision resulted in a small business success building on the rich history of

Michigan's Copper Country to attract today's travelers.

Nestled in the heart of the Keweenaw Peninsula's copper country in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and built for Thomas H. Hoatson, Jr., owner of the Calumet and Arizona Mining Company, this mansion started off as a 13,000-square-foot home for the Hoatson family. It remains the largest mansion in the western portion of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The extravagance of the structure was by far its best known feature. From the embossed elephant leather on the walls, to the grand staircase which spans three floors, to the hand-painted wall mural, stained glass windows, and giant Corinthian columns, the Hoatson mansion was the epitome of opulence. Mr. Hoatson, Jr., a Houghton County native of Scottish descent, made his fortune in the copper mining and banking industries. He spent \$50,000 building the mansion at a time when miners were making 25 cents an hour.

Undaunted by the prospect of restoring this enormous and ornate structure, Dave and Julie Sprenger bought the mansion in September of 1989, opened it as a bed and breakfast, listed it as the Laurium Manor Inn on the National Register of Historic Places, and established it as a heritage site within the Keweenaw National Historical Park. This has been no easy task. In addition to the constant renovations and repairs, the remote location of the village of Laurium, the harsh winters of the Upper Peninsula, and the changeable nature of tourism have all challenged the Sprenger's small business. However, throughout all of this, the Sprengers have persevered and continue to provide quality service to the local community and visitors from around the world.

As a senior member of the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee, I recognize the important role small businesses play in creating jobs and growing the economy, and this bed and breakfast is no exception. I am delighted to congratulate Dave and Julie Sprenger on the 25th anniversary of their flourishing small business, which contributes to the local economy and enriches historical experiences for tourists and residents alike. I wish them many more decades of success.●

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEEP SUBMERGENCE VEHICLE ALVIN

● Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I want to congratulate the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, WHOI, on the 50th anniversary of the commissioning of the deep-sea, human-occupied submersible Alvin.

Alvin was commissioned on June 5, 1964, at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, in Woods Hole, MA. It is owned by the U.S. Navy and operated by WHOI. In one of its first missions, it responded to a national emergency in 1966, locating and helping to recover a hydrogen bomb that had accidentally dropped into the Mediterranean Sea.

In 1974, Alvin brought scientists for the first time to the mid-ocean ridge during Project FAMOUS, the French-American Mid-Ocean Undersea Study, and revealed a seafloor that scientists had not imagined. Project FAMOUS proved that submersibles could effectively explore the deep seafloor and marked the beginning a new era of exploration.

Alvin discovered and explored previously unknown and unexpected communities of deep-sea organisms that thrive in the absence of sunlight, sustained not by photosynthesis but by chemosynthesis. This discovery was one of the most profound of the 20th century, because it completely transformed our conceptions of where and how life can exist on this planet; reconfigured our search today for life on other planetary bodies; and opened entirely new lines of microbiological and biogeochemical research, including those that have led to commercial and pharmaceutical applications.

Over the following decades, Alvin discovered several previously unknown seafloor environments harboring a diversity of chemosynthetic communities, including high-temperature black-smoker chimneys that spew like undersea geysers in the Pacific, 1979; cold-seep habitats sustained by hydrogen sulfide, methane, and other hydrocarbon-rich fluids seeping from the seafloor Guaymas Basin, Gulf of California, 1982, and in the Gulf of Mexico, 1983; and "Lost City" environments, where seawater reacts with mantle rock, peridotite, to produce methane and hydrogen in the Atlantic, 2000.

Alvin has also explored another type of seafloor habitat—seamounts, or ancient undersea volcanoes—with their diverse communities of deep-sea corals, fish, and other organisms, in the Gulf of Alaska, the Pacific, and the Atlantic. Scientists aboard Alvin have discovered many hundreds of previously unknown marine species.

Alvin has contributed to other events of historical significance, exploring and bringing back images of the wreck of the Titanic in 1986 and responding to the Deepwater Horizon disaster, by investigating impacts to deep-sea habitats in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010.

Alvin inspired scientists and engineers to develop new generations of deep-submergence technology; including remotely operated vehicles, ROVs, tethered by fiber-optic cables and free-swimming autonomous underwater vehicles, AUVs. These vehicles are now routinely used for naval activities and national security, oil exploration, maritime, and other industries, environmental and fisheries monitoring, and disaster response, and are now being developed for use under ice in polar regions and to explore other planetary bodies.

Alvin resumed operations in 2014 after a major upgrade, funded by the National Science Foundation, Office of Naval Research, and WHOI, which dramatically enhanced its capabilities. An

anticipated second phase of this Alvin upgrade will increase the submersible's diving capacity from 4,500 to 6,500 meters, 14,000 to 21,000 feet, allowing it to reach 98 percent of the seafloor.

Alvin has been a workhorse for U.S. scientists, safely taking nearly 2,600 individual researchers on more than 4,700 dives to the ocean depths and is the only deep-sea human-occupied vehicle in the National Deep Submergence Facility for the U.S. oceanographic community. Alvin has thrilled and inspired generations of schoolchildren around the world with its adventures and discoveries and become an icon for exploration and a symbol of American ingenuity.

The accomplishments and discoveries achieved by this single submersible and the scientists, engineers and ship's crew who built, use, and operate it during its first 50 years demonstrate the importance of continued support for the development of deep-submergence technology and exploration of the largest portion of Earth's surface and its last frontier the ocean.

Alvin is a national scientific treasure and we are proud that it calls Massachusetts and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution home.●

RECOGNIZING SEEKINS PRECISION

● Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, America depends on the ingenuity of small business owners to propel the country forward in innovation. Seekins Precision demonstrates this originality by continuously improving their products for a unique industry. I rise today to honor Seekins Precision of Lewiston, ID, a small business whose commitment to manufacturing products for those who enjoy exercising their second-amendment rights honors both Idaho and the Nation.

Founded in 2004, Seekins Precision builds innovative products for precision shooters. As the result of an unsuccessful deer hunt, founder Glen Seekins identified a need for hunting equipment able to endure the natural elements of the Idaho mountains products that were durable, yet lightweight. The combination of Mr. Seekins' background in mechanical design and his entrepreneurial spirit sparked the design for Seekins Precision's flagship scope rings. After training himself on a computer numerical control machine to build scope rings, Mr. Seekins and his wife, Katie, set up shop in their garage. In November 2005, their scope rings became so popular in the local shooting community that the business developed into a full-time operation.

Over the past 10 years, Seekins Precision has achieved an outstanding reputation for quality, as well as that of a unique Idaho gem. Since its inception, Seekins Precision has expanded from only making scope rings with just a handful of employees, to developing over ten major upper-end rifle lines and creating more than 25 new jobs in