

Pine, Tennessee, where up to 2,000 people are expected to attend.

Governor Bill Haslam has proclaimed September 26th as Appalachian Electric Cooperative Day.

Since 1940, the member-owned, non-profit Appalachian Electric Cooperative has been providing reliable and affordable electricity across East Tennessee.

Today, it serves 45,000 people in Grainger, Hamblen, Jefferson and Sevier Counties.

Several years ago, I was named the number one champion of rural America in the entire House of Representatives.

I have always rooted for the little guy or the underdog in life. It is very important to stand up for small towns and rural areas because they do not have the resources of big cities and often get shortchanged.

I read recently that two-thirds of the counties in the U.S. are losing population. There are many small towns and rural areas across the Appalachian region that are barely holding on.

Without affordable, reliable electricity, these rural areas would cease to exist. We must do everything we can to support rural America and help stem this population loss.

Mr. Speaker, the Appalachian Electric Cooperative has been a lifeline for many thousands of people across rural East Tennessee for the last 75 years. I urge my colleagues and other readers of the RECORD to congratulate them on this milestone and thank them for their service to Tennessee.

GREATER LOVE HAS NO MAN THAN THIS THAT A MAN LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 2015

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, etched in white marble on a gravestone in Arlington National Cemetery is the name of Army Staff Sergeant Brian T. Craig. Born on April 2, 1975, he passed away 13 days after his 27th birthday on April 15, 2002 in Afghanistan.

Brian was a son, a friend and, most importantly to him, a Christian. Brian loved his family, and he made it a weekly ritual to call home early on Saturday mornings to let his parents know he was okay. He graduated from Klein Forest High School in 1993 and from there went on to enlist in the United States Army the next fall. His parents had encouraged him to go to college, but Brian was dead set on enlisting; it was in his blood. His father, Arthur, was stationed in Thailand with the Air Force during the Vietnam War. Brian served in Anchorage, Alaska as an Airborne Infantry soldier.

Upon reenlistment, he served in a range of Explosive Ordnance Disposal (E.O.D.) missions in support of the United States and NATO, even serving in Bosnia/Kosovo and The Republic of North Korea. He was deployed in support of Operation Noble Eagle/Enduring Freedom to Kandahar, Afghanistan in November of 2001, when he was later killed.

His parents, Arthur and Barbara Craig, heard news that four U.S. soldiers were killed

in Kandahar as they dismantled confiscated rockets, they feared their son was among that four.

Barbara was returning from the airport, after dropping her husband off for a mission trip, when she saw an Army car pull up in front of the house. Her worries were confirmed, Brian was among the dead in Afghanistan.

Brian paid the ultimate sacrifice; he laid down his life for not only his family and friends, but people he had never met. He was working to keep the civilians of Afghanistan safe, to make the world a little safer, too. Brian worked with a small team that went around and collected old bombs and rockets. They then took these explosives to a safe location to detonate them, so they would not harm other people. As his father put it, rather than using these weapons of destruction, Brian was cleaning up munitions left by past and present wars.

On the homepage of a memorial website for Brian reads a verse from the Book of John: "Greater love has no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends." This short scripture is a living testimony of the man that Brian was. He was a man of great faith whose life was a light in dark circumstances.

The website features one of Brian's last letters home. In this three page letter, Brian describes his walk with Christ. He says that during his time in Afghanistan, he had grown spiritually. He was a member of a men's bible study and reiterated that it was an answer to his prayers. He also stated that he never thought he could grow in his relationship with God and the people he worked with and that he wanted to make a difference in these men's lives.

And he did.

On the message board of his memorial website are short messages from Brian's friends, family and coworkers. A comment from Major Chris Miller, Commander, Special Forces, reads: "He let his silent comportment and deep faith speak for him instead of his words. This is such a rare quality in young people these days." In his letter, Brian graciously thanks his parents for their love and support. He let them know, the Lord was answering their prayers for him; he could feel it. He simply asked them to continue their prayers and sent his love.

Brian was a person of tremendous character and faith. He will not be forgotten. For his service, he was awarded the Purple Heart Medal and the Bronze Star Medal.

We should always support our troops, and we should always keep them in our thoughts and prayers. For the warriors across the globe who fight every day ensuring our well-being, there is no greater love.

God Bless our troops, and God Bless Army Staff Sergeant Brian T. Craig.

And that's just the way it is.

IN HONOR OF COUNCILMAN DAVID DUNCAN

HON. DONALD NORCROSS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 2015

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer my sincere condolences and honor the memory of Bellmawr, New Jersey, Councilman

David Duncan for his exemplary life of service to the Bellmawr community. In addition to being a beloved husband, father, and grandfather, Mr. Duncan was a resident of Bellmawr for almost forty-five years and spent his time giving back to his city.

Mr. Duncan was an experienced insurance agent and a member of the Union Ironworker Local #399 for 35 years. For years, he led the effort to get out the labor vote on Election Day. As Councilman, David oversaw the Department of Public Safety, and Department of Health, and served as the Planning Board Liaison. In addition, Mr. Duncan was active in many Bellmawr organizations. He served on the executive board of the Bellmawr Democrat Club, as president of the Bellmawr Lions Club, and as a member of the Bellmawr Men's Club.

Mr. Duncan was also a veteran of the United States Navy, as well as a dedicated member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, one of the largest organizations for combat veterans in the world and I thank him for his service to our great nation.

Mr. Speaker, David Duncan was an incredible man, dedicated to his family, community and country. He leaves behind a great legacy and I join the Bellmawr community and the entire state of New Jersey in honoring the achievements and the life of this great man.

HONORING VINCENT A. MIRO

HON. LOIS FRANKEL

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 2015

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Mr. Vincent A. Miro for his service in the United States Navy and to congratulate him for being presented with eight medals.

Mr. Miro served in the Navy for over 2 years during World War II. He enlisted as soon as he was old enough and served up until the end of the war in Europe. Mr. Miro served in the D-Day invasion, storming the beaches of Normandy when he was just 18. We are honored to present him with the following medals: World War II Victory Medal, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal, Navy Expeditionary Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal (with bronze star appurtenance), Combat Action Ribbon, Discharge Button, Honorable Service Lapel Pin (Ruptured Duck).

In honor of his commitment and sacrifice for his country, I am honored to recognize Mr. Vincent A. Miro and offer him my sincerest congratulations.

HONORING GAYLES MEMORIAL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

HON. BILL FOSTER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 2015

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the 65th Anniversary of Gayles Memorial Missionary Baptist Church in Aurora, Illinois.

Since 1950, the members of Gayles Memorial Missionary Baptist Church have committed

themselves to serving the west side of Aurora. From humble beginnings, the church has grown into a local institution with over 250 members, nine deacons, 10 associate ministers, and almost 30 ministries offering services including the children's choir, Sunday school classes, and youth bible study. Members are also dedicated to service outside of the church, volunteering at local charities, providing transitional counseling for incarcerated men and women, raising money for scholarship programs to help area youth, and answering many more calls for assistance from Auroraans.

I would like to thank the Reverend George Marshall and the congregation of Gayles Memorial Missionary Baptist Church for their continuing stewardship of our community.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 2015

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$18,151,143,313,299.53. We've added \$7,524,266,264,386.45 to our debt in 6 years. This is over \$7.5 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

200TH ANNIVERSARY OF ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

HON. ELIZABETH H. ESTY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 2015

Ms. ESTY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the St. John's Episcopal Church in Washington, Connecticut.

The history of St. John's Episcopal Church in Washington dates to before the Revolutionary War when missionaries celebrated Anglican rites with local residents. A handful of families bound by the mission of faithful service founded St. John's Episcopal Church and built their first wood frame church in Davies Hollow in 1794. In 1815, the wooden structure was moved by wagon to the parish's current home on the Green.

As the church's membership continued to grow, the congregation raised funds to build a new church. In 1915, renowned architect Ehrick Rossiter designed the stone structure that is still in use today. Over the decades, the church flourished. The ministries expanded to include a choir, Sunday school, and many community outreach activities. In 2012, Rev. Susan McCone was installed as the thirteenth Rector of St. John's Episcopal Church, the congregation's first female head.

Over the past 200 years, the Town of Washington grew around the church. Today, St. John's stands as an architectural landmark and spiritual beacon on Green Hill welcoming 200 families in fellowship. St. John's inclusive hospitality and dedication to promoting inter-

faith dialogue through educational programs and spiritual events builds the sense of community for parishioners and neighbors alike. The congregation supports the town through programs like the St. John's Emergency Fund, which helps Washington residents who experience urgent and unforeseen hardship with monetary assistance for food, medicine, and other necessities.

On August 29, 2015, St. John's Episcopal Church celebrated its 200th anniversary and the 100th anniversary of the historic stone church. Congratulations to Rev. McCone and all the parishioners of St. John's Episcopal Church. I wish you many more successful years ahead.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 2015

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I was absent due to illness and was not present for roll call votes on Tuesday, September 8, 2015. Had I been present, I would have voted in this manner:

Roll Call Vote #490—S. 1359, E-Warranty Act of 2015—yes.

HONORING THE LIFE OF CAPTAIN JAMES ALAN "TRUCK" HICKS

HON. RICHARD HUDSON

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 2015

Mr. HUDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of James Alan "Truck" Hicks, who was a Captain in the N.C. Air National Guard.

Captain Hicks died unexpectedly on Monday, July 27, 2015 after helping fight a house fire in Stanly County. He is the first member of the N.C. Air National Guard's fire service to die in the line of duty. On Sunday, Captain Hicks' unit was assigned to bring more water to the fire. However, more firefighters were needed on the interior of the home and Captain Hicks joined the attack.

Throughout his life, Captain Hicks was dedicated to his community and to helping others. In 1986, he began working with the Harrisburg Volunteer Fire Department. As time passed, he also worked with the Flowes Store Volunteer Fire Department as well as the Jackson Park Volunteer Fire Department, where he served as Chief for two years.

In addition, he worked for Concord Fire and Rescue for 10 years and was also with the Badin Volunteer Fire Department. Afterwards, he joined the North Carolina Air National Guard Fire Department for five years and served as Captain for two years.

Captain Hicks was a man of faith and served as a deacon at the Independence Square Baptist Church in Kannapolis. Despite his full schedule, he also served as a fire instructor at the Cleveland Community College in Shelby, N.C.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for Captain Hicks' service and dedication to our local communities and I join them now in grieving his passing.

TRIBUTE TO ALISON PARKER AND ADAM WARD

HON. J. RANDY FORBES

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 2015

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Alison Parker and Adam Ward, the young Virginia TV news reporter and cameraman who were tragically killed during a live broadcast on August 26th, 2015. In the face of such horrific evil, words fall short. But the lives of Alison and Adam will be remembered with great love. The thoughts and prayers of the nation remain with the families and loved ones of Alison and Adam, as well as the whole WDBJ news team and community of Franklin County, Virginia.

HONORING AND WELCOMING CZECH AMBASSADOR PETR GANDALOVIC AND SLOVAK AMBASSADOR PETER KMEC TO MISSOURI'S FIFTH DISTRICT

HON. EMANUEL CLEAVER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 9, 2015

Mr. CLEAVER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome Czech Ambassador Petr Gandalovic and Slovak Ambassador Peter Kmec to Missouri's Fifth Congressional District, which I proudly represent. The Ambassadors were invited by Kansas City based honorary consuls, Sharon Valášek (Czech Republic) and Ross Marine (Slovak Republic) for a "Celebration of Czechs & Slovaks Collaboration." The celebration includes meetings with local business leaders, a tour of The National World War I Museum and Memorial, a commemorative wreath-laying ceremony at the Truman Presidential Library and Museum and a special musical performance by world renowned Slovak violinist, Filip Pogády, sponsored by the National Czech & Slovak Museum and Library in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

This is an especially notable visit because of the Midwest's strong relationship with their two home countries, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. Thousands of immigrants from these central European countries have come to the heartland since the early history of our country. They farmed, worked hard labor jobs, became teachers and took great pride in being Americans. While the numbers are smaller than in the past, Czech and Slovak people continue to come to the Midwest and assimilate into our economy and our way of life.

The Czech Republic and Slovak Republic have been allies and friends of the United States, dating back to the formation of Czechoslovakia on Oct. 28, 1918, as witnessed by the close relationship of the two presidents, Woodrow Wilson of the United States and Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk of Czechoslovakia.

The United States encouraged political and economic transformation in Czechoslovakia after its liberation from communism in 1989, and established diplomatic relations with the Czech Republic in 1993 after the country split into two republics (Czech Republic and Slovak