

one of the most beautiful States. Our State is beautiful, with its rivers, lakes, rolling hills, mountains, and the flatlands over toward Memphis. Indeed, it is beautiful. It is also very long, and that is also quite remarkable to people when they start to drive through the State. They say: I spent a whole day driving through the State of Tennessee. From the time they enter up around Mountain City and Bristol and make their way through to Memphis, it does really take the whole day.

I think one of the things that interest people when they cross into Tennessee as they are going down I-81 is seeing the Bristol Motor Speedway. They realize that it is truly a feat of engineering—NASCAR is very popular—and realize the innovation and creativity that has gone into creating that speedway. Then to be there on race day, I will tell you, that is something that is quite amazing, to see those cars speeding around those banked turns and realize it is people who are handling these feats of engineering.

People also appreciate, in addition to the Bristol Motor Speedway and car racing, that Tennessee is a State that is very important to the automotive industry. You have Volkswagen in Chattanooga, and you have the GM facility at Spring Hill. Nissan North America's headquarters are located in Cold Springs, right outside of Nashville. Their manufacturing plant is in Smyrna. You have the Toyota plant that is over in West Tennessee.

We Tennesseans are also excited about the prospect of having an aerospace park that is going to be in East Tennessee, up at the Tri-Cities. As a member of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, I have had the privilege of working with the Tri-Cities Airport and local officials to make that a destination and to make it a reality.

A little further down in the State, as you get on I-40, you will find yourself in the middle of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the most visited park in our National Parks System. Senator ALEXANDER and I are continuing the work to designate the Dean Stone Bridge on the Foothills Parkway there in Blount County. Dean Stone was a pillar of the community, and naming the bridge in honor of him is the perfect way to thank him for his dedication in improving the lives of all those who live and enjoy the Smokies in that part of our State.

The Smokies are second in my heart to just one Tennessee landmark in Nashville that I think everyone wants to see. They are all country music fans, and they want to see the mother church of country music, which is the Ryman Auditorium. The best singers and songwriters in the world leave their stadiums and their festivals because they want to have the opportunity to play just one song on the stage of the Ryman Auditorium. It is a wonderful place to be and to celebrate

Tennessee's creativity and to celebrate the music that fills our hearts and our lives.

When I was a Member in the House, I worked tirelessly for several years and fought for the unanimous passage of the Music Modernization Act. That is something that fixed a lot of loopholes that were in U.S. law that adversely impacted our songwriters as they were facing copyright many times.

Upon coming to the Senate, I worked with Senator FEINSTEIN, continuing the fight on behalf of our songwriters to close the loopholes that exempt broadcast radio from paying royalties to music creators.

Tennessee is also known for some other wonderful music, a little bit further down I-40, and that is the blues. You can't leave the State of Tennessee without going through Memphis and having a visit over on Beale Street, right there on the banks of the mighty Mississippi.

The Mississippi River is our Nation's original superhighway, if you will. It is vitally important, not only to river but to rail, air, and highway transportation networks. All of these have found their way along West Tennessee's river lands.

Shipping and logistics giant FedEx has its corporate headquarters in Memphis. Memphis is the city of their founding and their headquarters location, and that takes advantage of Memphis International Airport and their cargo operations center.

All that being said, one of the things that individuals repeatedly comment on when they talk about Tennessee is how nice the people are in Tennessee, how welcoming they are, and how they engage you and want to make certain that you come back.

You will find in Tennessee a very diverse community. Yes, we are the home to artists and athletes. We are the home to engineers, to farmers, to doctors, to soldiers, and to veterans. It is, indeed, one of the best places on the face of the Earth to call home and, indeed, a certain not-to-be-missed destination for all Americans.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ALASKA

Ms. MURKOWSKI. My colleagues have been to the floor here for the past little bit talking about various road trips in their State and destinations, including their favorite destinations. When you think about where your favorite place is, it is like saying which son is your favorite son. We all have our favorite places all around our State.

I got to thinking about road trips. I thought, well, road trips in Alaska perhaps take a little bit of a different meaning than in other States. We all

know the State I come from because we talk about it a lot. Senator SULLIVAN and I come from a big State. We have over 663,000 square miles, but within those 663,000 square miles, we don't have a lot of roads. Over 82 percent of the communities in the State of Alaska are not connected by roads. We are not part of the road system. So traveling in Alaska can be a little bit of an adventure. Flexibility is always key.

More often than not, when you are in a big State, you move around from town to town, and you rely on the commercial carriers. You rely on Alaska Airlines. You rely on Ravn. You rely on some of the others. We pretty much move around by air.

But sometimes it is impossible to get around by air all the time. Sometimes we have what I call "forest road trips." It is not that I don't want to be on our roads, but once you get on the roads, you are on them for a fairly long time. Sometimes the jets don't fly. Sometimes the jets don't fly because you have bad weather. Sometimes the jets don't fly because you have a volcano that goes off.

I was holding a field hearing in Fairbanks and needed to get down to Anchorage, and Pavlof blew. Pavlof is one of our more active volcanoes, and it shuts down the air space. What was going to be a 45-minute trip home turned out to be a 359-mile drive home—7 hours—that evening.

We had another trip going out of Valdez to Anchorage, and we needed to get back to Anchorage that night, but the fog and the wind in Valdez said there are no planes coming in to take you out, and they might not be there the next day and they might not be there the next day after that. There is bad weather. The pass is shutting down so you better move now. When that happens, you get in a car and 300 miles later—5 hours later—you are in Anchorage.

I had Senator MANCHIN with me just over the Fourth of July break. We were headed from Anchorage to King Salmon on to attend a ribbon-cutting for a National Park Service facility. We got fogged out in the morning and waited for hours in the airport, and then we got word that the fog had lifted, and we were getting ready to get on a plane and they called a mechanical. If there is a mechanical, I am with you, and we just don't fly. Senator MANCHIN turned to me and said: I know it is a long way, but can't we just drive there?

That was my opportunity to turn to my colleague in another learning moment and tell him: No, this is one of those 82 percent of our communities where there is no road. So JOE, we are not flying.

Aviation really is our lifeline here. If you are not on Alaska Airlines, you are on one of our many bush carriers. This is a picture of a pilot I had an opportunity to fly with, Eric, who is the pilot and owner of Arctic Backcountry Flying Service. This is his Cessna 206. More often than not, these are the type

of aircraft that we are in. We are not flying in some fancy leased jet. We are in a small aircraft, what we call a bush carrier. That is when we have airstrips that we can land on.

But we don't have airstrips in many of our communities. What we do is we come in and out on the water on our floatplanes. Some people call them seaplanes out here. We call them floatplanes.

Here is a picture of me and Secretary Perry on Kodiak Island. We had flown over on Alaska Airlines. But to get around the island, you either take a boat or fly in a floatplane. We were flying over to Old Harbor there on Kodiak Island, but we got around on the water.

Sometimes you don't have the water though. In a place like Alaska, what we do have in the wintertime is a fair amount of snow. You take your floats off and you put your skis on. You can see the wheels there. This plane can land in Anchorage and take off in Anchorage on the wheels, but when you are up on Ruth Glacier, as this Cessna 185 is, you are landing on skis. That gets your attention because it is a little bit different than a floatplane, but it gets you in and out of what you need to get in and out of.

There are some places, though, where you don't have an airstrip, a floatplane can't land, and the only way to really get in and out is by helicopter.

Little Diomede Island sits out in the middle of the Bering Straits. It is 2 miles from Big Diomede. Big Diomede is owned by Russia. Little Diomede is owned by us. There are about 150-plus people who live out there on Diomede. They have a school, and they have a community center, but how do they get the mail? People move in and out by helicopter. The mail is delivered by helicopter. There are a few weeks in the wintertime—maybe, sometimes, as much as a couple of months—when the ocean freezes over and they can make a strip where a plane can land on the ice. But most of the year, you fly in and out on helicopter. So we fly.

The other way we get around when we don't have a lot of roads is on our rivers. One thing that Alaska is blessed with is a lot of rivers. We have 365,000 miles of rivers. That makes for a lot of roads because in the summertime, those rivers are our roads.

This is a picture upriver in the village of Napaskiak. There are about 500 people there. We had Attorney General Barr with us in May. We took him upriver. This is how he traveled. These are the Bethel Search and Rescue boats there. They are not fancy boats. They are not yachts. These are functional. They have decent motors on them because these are workhorses. Yet how we travel in the summer is up and down these rivers.

In the summer, it makes it possible to move around these communities. In the winter, you move around by snow machine. You have trucks and you have vehicles out there as well. When the rivers freeze, you then have your

frozen highway, and you can have 100 miles of it. The Kuskokwim, I think, plowed out 250 miles of road on the river.

This is a frozen river. This is actually a picture that was taken when we took Secretary Moniz from Bethel to Oscarville. We had with us about four other Members of the Senate because we had a field hearing for the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. We held it out there in Oscarville, and we had a motorcade on ice. It was basically about six trucks that went down the river, but the Secretary said it was his first official truck motorcade on ice. That really does allow us to get around when the rivers are frozen over.

Down in the southeastern part of the State, where I was born and spent a lot of my growing-up years, they are all islanded communities. There are 32 or 33 islanded communities in the southeast. So to move around, we either fly Alaska Airlines, fly smaller carriers, or we rely on our Alaska marine highway system, our ferry system. This is our marine lifeline. This is how we move freight, how we move vehicles, how we move goods, and how we move people.

Right now, our very system is threatened on a host of different levels, which really hurts my heart because, as one who knows how dependent we are on being able to move on the water, this is our road, and these types of vessels can move us in ways that are efficient. The marine highway system is our road. So we are working in the State right now to address it. Again, this is one more way that I do my road trips when I am back home in the State.

In the interior, you have communities, again, that are isolated. There is no road system that gets you there. There are small villages, Arctic villages, that are about 500 people strong.

I was in an Arctic village just in July, and this is how I was picked up at the airport. There are not many trucks. There are basically four-wheelers. There are ATVs, and everybody just hops on. This was my driver for the day. Again, you just hop on the back and ride.

Then, there are some communities in which, really, the way that you get around is not on a road and not on a sidewalk but on just a wooden trail, a wooden boardwalk. This is the village of Napaskiak. This is out in the Bethel region, in the Y-K Delta. These are just planks that are put down on top of the tundra because the area is so marshy that you cannot walk on it. You would need hip waders to be better able to travel through it. Just walking around on the boardwalk is the extent of your road trip in a place like Nunam Iqua or Napaskiak.

Whether it is freedom to be on a frozen river or freedom to be out on the Arctic Ocean, wintertime gives us a little bit more freedom. This is a picture of me with a friend, off of Utqiagvik, which is on the Arctic Ocean. It looks like a lot of fun. We were going out

snow-machining. We were going out to work because the community had harvested a whale, and the whaling crew and the community were taking their snow machines out to load the muktuk onto sleds to haul back to the community so it could be shared as part of their subsistence food. So we were going out to help the community harvest that whale. This is not fun and recreation. It is your means of transportation. This is your workhorse.

We do have a little bit of fun every now and again. Everyone asks: Do you ever travel around by dog sled? That is my dream. That would be the next career opportunity for me. I would love to run the Iditarod, and I would love to have my own dog team, but, right now, I don't have enough hours in my day. Yet, every now and again, you can hop on the back of a dog sled.

I am looking forward to being back home and traveling around the State, visiting from Ketchikan to Barrow. It is 4,000 miles for Senator SULLIVAN, Congressman YOUNG, and me to get back and forth between Washington, DC, and Alaska. I have kind of mapped out my trip for the month ahead. Once I get back to Alaska, in that first couple of weeks, I will have doubled that airtime, if you will. Then, with the additional travel that we have toward the end of August, I am looking at about 15,000 miles of travel within my State.

I know many of my colleagues are going to exotic locations that will take them to places that will be a long, long ways away. Yet I am just reminded every day of the privilege and the honor of being able to travel through an extraordinary State like Alaska, where we use a little bit of everything to get us to where we need to go in order to visit some of the finest Americans whom I know and am blessed to be able to serve.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

OKLAHOMA

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, August is coming quickly. It is the time that we have a gap in the legislative calendar. As this body knows well, Congress is in session for 11 months of the year. We have one month in which we are not in Washington, DC, which gives us the opportunity to be home and to, quite frankly, catch up with family but also to be able to travel around our States, see what is going on in our States, and talk to folks.

I happen to live in an unbelievably beautiful State. In August, Oklahoma is crazy hot and humid, but it is a great time to get a chance to see people and to see what is going on.

In just the few weeks around this time period, I have already been to Ada and Durant and Calera, and I will be heading quickly to Chickasha, Lindsay, Lawton, Vinita, Miami—that is not “Miami—ee”; the correct pronunciation is “Miami—ah”—Afton, Grove, Jay, Chelsea, Hennessey, Enid, up to Kaw Lake, and, of course, all around the