

the money laundering, corruption, and violent crime associated with it.

While these efforts have helped stem the precipitous decline in the numbers of great apes, their survival in the wild remains far from assured. Transnational criminal organizations, catering to a rapacious Asian market for wildlife parts, are reaping huge profits from the illegal wildlife trade. These organizations are often also involved in trafficking drugs, weapons, and human beings. The ever-increasing demand for timber, minerals, and food in Asia, Africa, and Latin America is destroying wildlife habitat at an alarming rate. Rainforests are being transformed into polluted wastelands from mining, massive farms of oil palm and soybeans, and grazing land for cattle. Great apes, which like many species need large areas to forage for food, are being squeezed from all directions.

Despite the administration's disastrous decision to shut down USAID and destroy the careers of thousands of talented and dedicated USAID employees, Congress has continued to provide funding to protect endangered species, including great apes. But the amount of funding has been sharply reduced, and it remains to be seen whether the State Department will manage the funds in the manner intended by Congress.

Orangutans, gorillas, chimpanzees, and bonobos are the only existing examples of our earliest apelike ancestors who first began walking upright nearly 4 million years ago. Despite having existed for millions of years and sharing 97 percent of our DNA, great apes today are entirely dependent on us for survival.

I have urged the Appropriations Committee to increase funding for great ape conservation while there is still time to protect them from extinction. I also urge the State Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to recognize what is at stake and to resume and significantly expand their efforts to protect great ape habitat and combat poaching and trafficking.

And finally, I urge the leaders of Indonesia and the central African countries that are home to great apes to recognize their unique responsibility to ensure the survival of these animals by protecting their forest habitat; greatly strengthening enforcement of anti-trafficking laws; supporting programs to rescue, rehabilitate, and return to the wild great apes that have been trafficked; and educating their people about the need to protect great apes and the forests they depend on.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING LEAH JEAN BOUTIQUE

• Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, as chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, each week I recognize an outstanding Iowa

small business that exemplifies the American entrepreneurial spirit. This week, it is my privilege to honor Leah Jean Boutique of Wright County, IA, as the Senate Small Business of the Week.

Founded in 2018 by Brittany Leah Howieson and Donna Jean Ahrends, Leah Jean Boutique was established to provide families in Clarion with a welcoming, locally owned storefront offering curated children's items. Attached to their salon, the boutique was created not only to meet the needs of local families, but also to help sustain and strengthen small-town Main Street commerce in north Iowa. Brittany and Donna, who first met when Donna taught Brittany in beauty school years earlier, later expanded their shared entrepreneurial vision into the boutique now recognized throughout the region for its personal customer service and carefully selected products.

For nearly a decade, Leah Jean Boutique has provided high-quality apparel, toys, pet products, and gifts that help customers celebrate both everyday moments and special milestones. As a woman-owned small business, Leah Jean Boutique has built its identity around a "for moms, by moms" philosophy rooted in firsthand experience and trust. Brittany and Donna personally select and test the products offered in the store, helping Iowa families navigate an increasingly overwhelming retail environment filled with countless online options and inconsistent reviews. Their emphasis on quality, reliability, and personalized attention has helped establish Leah Jean Boutique as a trusted destination for folks throughout Wright County and the surrounding communities.

Beyond its retail offerings, Leah Jean Boutique reflects the strong community-minded spirit that defines Iowa small businesses. Brittany and Donna remain actively involved in local organizations and community initiatives. This includes leadership roles within their Philanthropic Educational Organization, P.E.O., Chapter, participation on the Committee for Golden Apples for Teachers program, Brittany's service as president of the Clarion Development Alliance, and organizing family-oriented community events that support downtown Clarion and surrounding communities. Their continued investment in local engagement demonstrates a commitment not only to entrepreneurship but also to strengthening economic vitality and preserving the sense of community that keeps Iowa's small towns thriving.

I am pleased to recognize Brittany and Donna at Leah Jean Boutique for their dedication to Clarion and Wright County. I look forward to their continued success and wish them the very best in the years ahead.●

RECOGNIZING BLUE FOX THEATRE

• Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, Idaho's small businesses are the backbone of our economy and our communities.

These small businesses not only employ our friends and neighbors but also provide invaluable goods and services that showcase Idaho's ingenuity and shared values. They are an intrinsic element of the Gem State and deserve to be celebrated.

I am proud to launch my seventh annual Support Local Gems, a successful statewide initiative, on June 12, to encourage Idahoans to support the small businesses that make our State thrive. As a member and former chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I am pleased to honor Blue Fox Theatre in Grangeville during Support Local Gems as one of Idaho's Small Businesses of the Month for June 2026.

Cory and Haley Kooole, who also operate the local Napa Auto Parts, purchased the historic Blue Fox Theatre in 2024. The pair have worked to maintain the theatre's long legacy and keep movies running while expanding the business to serve the region beyond entertainment. Supporting a wide range of community-centered events and charitable causes, including fundraisers for the local veterans center, medical benefit dinners, and memorial gatherings, the Blue Fox is well ingrained in the fabric of the Grangeville community.

Originally opened in 1930, the Blue Fox Theatre is an iconic landmark and gathering place in Grangeville for nearly a century. Its famous neon marquee won Idaho's statewide historic sign competition earlier this year, and the building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1999, emphasizing the theater's enduring role in Idaho's past and present.

The Blue Fox Theatre was built during a pivotal moment in American history, as the film industry transitioned from silent movies to "talkies" and the Nation entered the Great Depression. The original owner Al J. Wagner took a huge financial risk in building the theater in rural Idaho. That gamble paid off. Opening night was a full town event, complete with live music and front-page coverage in the local paper.

Over the decades, the Blue Fox overcame numerous challenges that forced many small-town theaters to close their doors. In the early 1940s, the building survived a fire that collapsed the roof and destroyed most of the interior. Rather than abandoning the theater, the Wagner family rebuilt it with much community support. The theatre also survived significant changes within the movie industry, competition with television and multiplex theaters, and the shift from film reels to digital projection. Through it all, the Blue Fox persevered.

Cory and Haley see the theater not only as a business but as the perfect avenue to invest in the people of north central Idaho. They prioritize community over profit, using the theater to preserve history, help neighbors, strengthen community ties, and invest locally.

Congratulations to Cory and Haley Koole and the entire Blue Fox team for being selected as an Idaho Small Business of the Month for June 2026. You are an outstanding example of what it means to be one of Idaho's Local Gems. You make our great State proud, and I look forward to your continued growth and success.●

RECOGNIZING THE CANDY JAR

● Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, Idaho's small businesses are the backbone of our economy and our communities. These small businesses not only employ our friends and neighbors but also provide invaluable goods and services that showcase Idaho's ingenuity and shared values. They are an intrinsic element of the Gem State and deserve to be celebrated.

I am proud to launch my seventh annual Support Local Gems, a successful statewide initiative, on June 12, to encourage Idahoans to support the small businesses that make our State thrive. As a member and former chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I am pleased to honor The Candy Jar in Blackfoot during Support Local Gems as one of Idaho's Small Businesses of the Month for June 2026.

Judy and Paul Loomis purchased a historic building in Blackfoot in early 2019 and quickly began renovations. On top of launching a successful candy shop, the couple's goal was to restore the city's downtown and prove that a small business can make a big impact. After 10 months of hard work and dedication, the Loomises opened The Candy Jar.

Located across the street from The Idaho Potato Museum, The Candy Jar immediately became popular with museum visitors. Judy and Paul put the Gem State at the forefront of their business, highlighting Idaho's and the building's rich history. In addition to the store's handmade fudge, The Candy Jar sells Idaho products like heart-shaped suckers from a local candy-maker who still uses her grandmother's recipe, hand-dipped chocolates from Weiser, and many more confections from Post Falls, Pocatello, Caldwell, and everywhere in between.

Their offerings have become a fan favorite and helped to inspire economic development throughout the city. In the 7 years since The Candy Jar opened, Blackfoot has seen new small businesses start, grow, and renovate other historic buildings.

While Judy and Paul have enjoyed watching more opportunities come to the city, their favorite part of running the store is interacting with customers. From locals who have become extended family to travelers passing through town looking for a treat, Judy and Paul find joy in helping customers find the right sweet to satisfy any craving.

Congratulations to Judy and Paul Loomis and the entire Candy Jar team

for being selected as an Idaho Small Business of the Month for June 2026. You are an outstanding example of what it means to be one of Idaho's Local Gems. You make our great State proud, and I look forward to your continued growth and success.●

RECOGNIZING JUNKYARD JEANS

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I am proud to launch my seventh annual Support Local Gems, a successful statewide initiative, on June 12, to encourage Idahoans to support the small businesses that make our State thrive. As a member and former chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I am pleased to honor Junkyard Jeans in Boise during Support Local Gems as one of Idaho's Small Businesses of the Month for June 2026.

Started in 1991 by Eric Schrader, Junkyard Jeans has built a reputation for exceptional craftsmanship and dedication to American-made products. What began with Eric's passion for designing and manufacturing quality denim has since grown into a unique and beloved Boise business. Today, Junkyard Jeans offers a curated selection of vintage goods, including custom chain-stitched and embroidered garments and one-of-a-kind collectible pieces.

Partnering with another Idaho business, McKinney Monograms, Eric and his team learned the art of chain-stitching and embroidery techniques used by old-school masters who worked on vintage denim. Much of Junkyard Jeans' manufacturing work is done in-house with entirely American materials, ensuring each piece in the store has a unique character.

Junkyard Jeans has also invested in the next generation, collaborating with Boise State University, BYU Idaho, and the International Business Program to start an internship program for students interested in clothing design and manufacturing. In 2013, the company participated in a traveling artisan makers project that showcased Idaho craftsmanship and custom sewing across the country.

Located in the heart of Boise, Junkyard Jeans has seen dozens of storefronts come and go. Recognizing the challenges and opportunities many Main Street retailers face, Eric has dedicated much of his 30 years in operation to working with surrounding small businesses and hosting block parties and community events to encourage residents to shop small.

Congratulations to Eric Schrader and the entire Junkyard Jeans team for

being selected as an Idaho Small Business of the Month for June 2026. You are an outstanding example of what it means to be one of Idaho's Local Gems. You make our great State proud, and I look forward to your continued growth and success.●

RECOGNIZING NEW YORK PIZZA DEPARTMENT

● Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, Idaho's small businesses are the backbone of our economy and our communities. These small businesses not only employ our friends and neighbors but also provide invaluable goods and services that showcase Idaho's ingenuity and shared values. They are an intrinsic element of the Gem State and deserve to be celebrated.

I am proud to launch my seventh annual Support Local Gems, a successful statewide initiative, on June 12, to encourage Idahoans to support the small businesses that make our State thrive. As a member and former chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I am pleased to honor New York Pizza Department in Post Falls during Support Local Gems as one of Idaho's Small Businesses of the Month for June 2026.

Originally called Nate's New York Pizza, the business was founded in 2009 by Nate Banner with the goal of bringing authentic New York-style food to north Idaho. Applying what he learned from a New Yorker who had moved out West, Nate got to work crafting a menu based on quality and tradition.

Today, the business is known as New York Pizza Department, or NYPD as it is often referred to by Post Falls locals. The name pays tribute not only to the pizza's New York roots but also to all the first responders that serve north Idaho.

Michael Kuipers purchased the store in March of 2026 and, alongside his wife and daughter, operates the business with a passion for building connections with the community over New York-style pizza. Using the original recipes and techniques Nate passed down from New York natives, Michael has cultivated a welcoming gathering place for families, friends, and neighbors.

A major priority for Michael is their work with the Post Falls community to support local schools and teachers. From donating pizzas for events to recognizing educators who go above and beyond, New York Pizza Department is heavily involved in strengthening the growing north Idaho community. The store also puts a heavy emphasis on giving back to local first responders, including the Post Falls Police Department. For Michael, these efforts are not only rewarding but a helpful way to build meaningful connections beyond delicious pizza.

Congratulations to Michael and the entire New York Pizza Department team for being selected as an Idaho Small Business of the Month for June 2026. You are an outstanding example