

10/20/2008 This Week In Congress

This Week in Congress

October 20, 2008

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." Congress is out of session which has allowed me to travel extensively across Kansas this past week. I hope you find this newsletter useful.

Speaking with Kansas Students

This week, I visited with students at several Kansas schools. I met with students at St. John High School, McPherson High School, Hutchinson Community College and Pratt Community College. It is important for me to stay in touch with young people and to learn from them about issues they find important. I spoke with the students about my responsibilities as an elected official, the presidential election and our economy. I told students I voted against the \$700 billion bailout package in part because of its extraordinary cost to them and risk to future generations. The package will increase our nation's debt to \$11.3 trillion.

Thanks to Jane Bennington at St. John High School and Rick Reed at McPherson High School for allowing me to speak with their students. I also appreciated Hutchinson Community College President Ed Berger's invitation to visit with a leadership class at the college co-taught by President Berger and Dean of Student Services Randy Myers. During my visit at Hutchinson Community College, I was able to tour the industrial technology center, observe an industrial electronics project and visit the welding facility on campus. Thanks to President Berger and Dean Myers for the tour they gave me as well. [Click here to view photos.](#)

I visited Pratt Community College (PCC) in Pratt on Tuesday. While on campus, I stopped by the President's Cabinet meeting, visited a history class, learned about training simulators for nursing students and toured the recently installed wind turbines. In December, PCC installed three wind generators that supply approximately 30 percent of the college's electricity. Thanks to President Bill Wojciechowski, Vice President for Instruction Jim Stratford, Vice President for Finance and Operations Kent Adams, Vice President for Students and Enrollment Management Lisa Perez, Athletic Director Kurt McAfee and Gregg Wade.

While at St. John High School, I had the opportunity to meet sophomore Tyler Clark, who is applying for the spring 2009 Page Program in Washington, D.C. I was able to tell him what pages do and answer his questions about our nation's capital. [Click here for more information about the Page Program.](#)

Touring Promise Regional Medical Center in Hutchinson

I was at the recently renamed Promise Regional Medical Center on Thursday to meet CEO, Linda Harrison and her leadership team. We discussed health care issues and also toured the hospital, where I saw a dual source 64 slice CT scanner. Promise is only the second hospital in Kansas to offer this state of the art medical technology, which provides picture taking ability so precise that most patients do not need to take additional drugs.

In addition, I learned that in December, Promise will be the first hospital in the state to house a TomoTherapy center. TomoTherapy is a new liver cancer treatment that uses a CT scanner during radiation therapy.

I also stopped by the hospital's new cardiac catheterization lab and its hyperbaric oxygen chamber. While at the oxygen chamber, I had the chance to visit with two patients, Larry Smile and Peggy Hansen. Larry and Peggy's positive attitudes brightened my day. I wish them the best. [Click here for photos.](#)

Attending the Kansas Association of Broadcasters Convention in Wichita

On Monday, I attended the annual Kansas Association of Broadcasters (KAB) Convention in Wichita. At the program, I spoke about the challenges and opportunities the broadcasting world faces, and expressed my appreciation to Kansas radio and television for their commitment to local news, weather and sports. Congratulations to the award winners and hall of fame inductees this year. The 2008 Sonny Slater Award recipient is Bill "Ray" Rowson, of Salina. Ken Clifford, of Wichita, is the 2008 Mike Oatman Award winner. This year's Hall of Fame Inductees included: former KAB Chairman Robert Hilton of Hiawatha; sportscaster and "Voice of the Kansas City Chiefs," Mitch Hothus of Silver Lake; weatherman Merrill Teller; former weatherman Jim O'Donnell; and Steve McIntosh of Wichita. I appreciate KAB executive director Kent Cornish and KAB president Mark Vail for inviting me to be a part of this special night.

Attending Lions and Kiwanis Meetings

Lions Club Meetings in Salina and Hutchinson: Across our state, Kansans help better the places they live by being involved in civic organizations. I had the opportunity this week to speak with Lions Club members in Salina and Hutchinson. This year marks my 30th year as a member of the Lion's Club. I spoke about the importance of serving one's local community and thanked Lion's Club members for the enthusiasm they show for community service. I also spoke about current events, including the state of our nation's economy, the bailout package and the importance of personal

responsibility. Thanks to Salina Lions Club President Dr. Kenton Driver and Hutchinson Lions Club President Melvin Barnett. [Click here to view photos.](#)

Kiwanis Club Meeting in Russell: I spoke at the Kiwanis Club meeting in Russell to give an update on the economic matters that Congress before it adjourned. I was able to talk to community leaders about other topics that will be on the national agenda when Congress reconvenes. I always enjoy meeting with Kiwanis members in Kansas. Thanks to James Malone for inviting me to speak. I also thank Dr. Gene Davidson for introducing me.

Recognizing National Honor Society Inductees in Hays

On Tuesday night, I joined parents and community members in Hays to recognize students from Hays High School that were inducted into the National Honor Society. This organization recognizes high school students who have demonstrated excellence in scholarship, leadership, service and character. I was pleased so many adults attended the ceremony to reinforce the message that education is important. Congratulations to all of the students who received this honor.

Opening New Pharmacy in La Crosse

On Friday, I attended the grand opening of Hoyt Pharmacy, which will serve the people of La Crosse and the surrounding areas. Rush County has been without a pharmacy since early this year. It is important for Kansans to have access to a local pharmacy and I am pleased that this new business will be joining the La Crosse downtown community.

I joined Holly Hoyt, pharmacist and owner, her husband Glenn, Linda Kenyon, Chamber President, and Senator Janis Lee and Representative Virginia Beamer, as well as many community members at the ceremony. Rush County Economic Development, Rush County Memorial Hospital, and the Rush County Chamber of Commerce deserve congratulations for their efforts to recruit the Hoyt's and for restoring this important piece of the health care system in La Crosse. [Click here to view photos.](#)

Touring Developmental Services of Northwest Kansas, Inc.

On Friday, I toured the Developmental Services of NW Kansas, Inc. (DSNWK), at the Reed Development Center in Hays. I was able to learn more about the center while also getting to meet some people who utilize their services. DSNWK provides services and programs to more than 500 individuals with mild to severe disabilities. They provide these services through community based and outreach programs and are able to serve 18 northwestern counties of Kansas.

During my visit, I met with the management team who explained current difficulties of working with a flat budget while expenses continue to increase. They explained that the increase in the price of gas has also increased their overall transportation costs because they travel between 18 counties to provide services.

Thanks to Jerry Michaud, president of DSNWK, for inviting me to tour.

I received good news this week that the Kansas National Guard's STARBASE academies in Salina and Kansas City will continue to receive funding to remain fully staffed and operational in 2009. The Kansas STARBASE program educates students in the fourth through sixth grades by encouraging interest in math and science through demonstrations and hands-on projects. Since 1992, the program has reached over 30,000 youth throughout the state. Last year, I joined the Kansas Congressional delegation in supporting full funding for Kansas' four STARBASE academies in Salina, Kansas City, Wichita, and Topeka.

Attending the Ellsworth County Historical Society Annual Soup Supper at Fort Harker

On Saturday, I attended the Ellsworth County Historical Society Annual Soup Supper at Fort Harker in Kanopolis. Established in 1866, Fort Harker served for nearly a decade as a supply depot and command center to the network of Kansas forts. Fort Harker's strategic location was also an asset to settlers seeking a better life in the western frontier. Today, Fort Harker has been restored into a museum to preserve the story and remind us of its importance to our history. Thank you to the Ellsworth County Historical Society for allowing me the pleasure to join in this great event. Also, thank you to the cooks, Linnea Beebe, Cherie Sauers, Lonnie Soukup and Janie Essick for the delicious meal. [Click here to view a photo of the event.](#)

In the Office

Several Kansans were in this week for a tour of the United States Capitol, including Mike and Bernita Gawith of Stockton, Ron and Nancy Chandler of Salina, Judy Schade of Olpe, Robyn Bowman of Ottawa and Judy Marcotte of Plainville. Also in for a tour were Cleo Duffey of Menlo, Vera Mae O'Bannon of Westfall, Gayla Moeckel of Plevna, Michelle Young of Inman and Darrin and Darcy Gollither of Meade. Scott Rock of Junction City, Linda Barten of Chapman, Gayle Clements of Herrington, Steve Snook of Topeka. Also, Jan Lohr, Barb Thomas, Sherida Shoff, Darren Kannady and

Chris Biel of Goodland received tours this week.

Jim Stack of Manhattan, a Kansas State University professor and director of the Great Plains Diagnostic Network, was in to discuss the importance of the diagnostic network to protect the nation's food supply from invasive pests and disease and bioterrorist attacks.

Very truly yours,

Jerry