

## 5/01/2006 This Week in Congress

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May 1, 2006

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." I hope you find this newsletter useful.

### Agriculture Committee Reviews Gasoline Prices and Futures Markets

The House Committee on Agriculture held a hearing this week to review the role of futures markets in determining gasoline prices. As the average price of gas nationwide approaches \$3, the Committee sought to ensure that activity on the futures markets was not improperly influencing the high price of gasoline.

High gasoline prices are affecting people all across the nation. Several factors are contributing to the current situation, including increased global competition for limited supplies of oil, the instability of foreign sources of energy, as well as disruptions in domestic production and refining capacity as a result of last year's hurricanes. The goal of the hearing was to determine if there is reason to believe there are problems in the futures market, what type of surveillance is being conducted to prevent and detect manipulation, and if the regulators are equipped with the appropriate authority and enforcement mechanisms.

In Kansas, businesses and families are faced with long car trips and our agriculture producers rely on gasoline and diesel to operate equipment. There is promise in the Heartland for producing and utilizing alternative energy sources like ethanol, biodiesel and wind energy. I will continue to support further development of these alternative energy sources to ease the burden of high fuel prices on Kansans.

#### Testifying about the Republican River Basin before House Resources Subcommittee

I spoke before the House Resources Subcommittee on Water and Power this week regarding legislation I introduced with Congressman Tom Osborne of Nebraska. H.R. 4750 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of implementing water supply and conservation projects to improve water supply reliability, increase water storage capacity, and improve water management efficiency in the Republican River Basin between Harlan County Lake in Nebraska and Milford Lake in Kansas. The feasibility study authorized by this legislation is one of the remedial measures agreed to in the Republican River Compact Settlement. Congressman Osborne and I will continue to work together to find solutions to the water supply issues with the Republican River and Bostwick irrigation districts.

#### Legislation for Memorial Honoring President Eisenhower on Way to President

The companion legislation to what I introduced in the House unanimously passed this week to grant initial site approval for the Dwight D. Eisenhower memorial in Washington, D.C. This legislation passed the Senate earlier this month and will now be sent to the President to be signed into law.

This is the first step in making this tribute to one of Kansas' most famous sons a reality. I shared my support for passage of this legislation in a speech to the House of Representatives. The full text of the speech is available at:  
[http://www.house.gov/apps/list/speech/ks01\\_moran/](http://www.house.gov/apps/list/speech/ks01_moran/)

[sp042506EisenhowerMemorial.html](#)

## Reviewing Delivery and Implementation of the Federal Crop Insurance Program

This week, my Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities and Risk Management convened the second in a series of two hearings to review the federal crop insurance program. Crop insurance is an integral part of our producers' operations and it is the goal of my Subcommittee to ensure that the opportunity to participate in the program is afforded to every producer and to ensure that it is administered efficiently and effectively.

In mid-March, my Subcommittee heard from the Administration and industry representatives about the state of the crop insurance industry. This week's hearing provided an opportunity to gather feedback from producers about the delivery and implementation of the program. Kansas witnesses included Steve Baccus, President of Kansas Farm Bureau, and Dr. Art Barnaby, Kansas State University Professor of Agricultural Economics. Keith Miller, a Barton County farmer, also submitted testimony for the hearing. Other witnesses included the Honorable John Hoeven, Governor of North Dakota, and several agriculture association representatives.

The full news release is available from the Agriculture Committee at:  
<http://agriculture.house.gov/press/109/pr060426.html>

## Evaluating the Shortage of Railroad Capacity in the United States

I attended a Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Railroads hearing this week on the shortage of railroad capacity in the United States. The amount of rail freight traffic is expected to double its current level by 2025. With the current crunch on capacity, viable solutions are needed. A possible solution could include giving the railroads more incentives to invest their money into expanding new track to help meet demand. Another solution discussed at the hearing was upgrading physical infrastructure such as signaling systems and other technologies which would increase efficiency and allow more trains to use the track in less time.

#### Discussing Progress of Salina's Schilling Air Force Base with Corp of Engineers

Colonel Mike Rossi, head of the Kansas City division of the Corps of Engineers, was in my office this week to give me an update on cleanup efforts of contamination at the former Schilling Air Force Base in Salina. Colonel Rossi updated me on a meeting he attended recently in Junction City with representatives from the city of Salina, Kansas State University at Salina, and the Salina Airport Authority. The Corps has agreed to specifically focus on the north plume of contamination which is closest to the city's wells. I will continue to closely follow the situation and help make sure the Kansas City Corps is keeping its obligations to the community.

In addition, I asked Colonel Rossi to work with the Wet Walnut Creek Watershed when it comes to the permit process to build a dam to help flood control in the area. I also expressed my concern about the long, drawn out plans the Army has had for privatization of electrical services at Ft. Riley. The process has caused a great deal of confusion and expense for local electrical cooperatives.

#### Recognizing the 2006 Inductees to the National Teachers Hall of Fame

In a speech to the House of Representatives, I recognized this year's inductees into the National Teachers Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame, located in Emporia, is now in its 15th year and continues its mission to honor exceptional teachers and promote excellence in teaching. The five recognized elementary and high school educators collectively have 134 years of teaching experience from across the country, including Mississippi, New York, Washington, New Mexico and Virginia. I commend the National Teachers Hall of Fame and its 2006 inductees. The full speech can be read at: [http://www.house.gov/apps/list/speech/ks01\\_moran/sp042506TeacherHallofFame.html](http://www.house.gov/apps/list/speech/ks01_moran/sp042506TeacherHallofFame.html)

[sp042506TeacherHallofFame.html](http://www.house.gov/apps/list/speech/ks01_moran/sp042506TeacherHallofFame.html)

#### Reporting to U.S. Trade Representative Portman about my Efforts in Geneva

Upon returning from Geneva, I visited with U.S. Trade Representative Rob Portman about my meetings with trade representatives and World Trade Organization officials and reported on my efforts on behalf of Kansas farmers and ranchers. I also conveyed my appreciation to Ambassador Portman for his work on these trade negotiations. Mr. Portman has been named the Director of the Office of Management and Budget by President Bush. The Deputy Trade Representative, Susan Schwab, will assume the U.S. Trade Representative position and continue to represent the interests of our American producers.

#### Speaking about the Future of Food Aid at International Conference

Last Monday, I was in Kansas City to speak at the Horizon of Hope - International Food Aid Conference hosted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Agency for International Development. Attendees included a unique cross section of entities active in the food aid program. The annual international conference was an opportunity to communicate with all groups involved in delivering U.S. agricultural products to nearly 80 countries through various food aid programs.

I spoke to the group about the future of food aid in the next farm bill. It is important that Congress understand that U.S. food products are the highest quality products in the world and are key to providing relief to disaster stricken countries around the globe. In-kind U.S. food aid is a visual reminder of our nation's compassion for those less fortunate and a vital tool to win the hearts and minds of people in countries susceptible to terrorism. In addition, the use of in-kind U.S. food aid provides jobs at home. As the legislative process moves forward, Congress should be mindful that the first objective of food aid is to address humanitarian needs and that flexibility within the program is necessary.

#### Discussing Conditions in Israel with Consul General Barukh Binah

Before speaking at the USDA/USAID International Food Aid Conference, I joined members of the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce and Kansas City Jewish Community Relations Bureau to hear an update from Consul General Barukh Binah on events in Israel. The Consul discussed current conditions in his country, the security issues Israel faces, the election in Palestine and the Hamas government, as well as trade opportunities for U.S. businesses. I appreciated the opportunity to join these two Kansas City groups and receive an update about conditions in Israel from the Consul.

#### Honoring Governor Bill Graves as the Kansan of the Year

This week, the Kansas State Society of Washington, D.C., hosted its annual Cherry Blossom Banquet. Each year the society selects a "Kansan of the Year." It was my pleasure to introduce Governor Bill Graves as this year's honoree. Also recognized at the event was this year's Cherry Blossom Queen, Kristina Hilboldt of Derby, who will represent the United States in upcoming travel to Japan. As always, the event provided an opportunity for Kansans who currently live in the Washington, D.C., area to connect with others who share similar roots and values.

### Joining Hays Area Business Members at Chamber of Commerce Lunch

On Friday, I joined business members from the Hays area for the Chamber of Commerce's monthly membership lunch. The event was hosted by Sunflower Electric Power Corporation and featured President and CEO Earl Watkins who spoke about leadership. It was also the graduation of the Leadership Hays 2006 class. Rachel Roach of my Hays office was a member of the class. This program is designed to foster leaders in the community. I always appreciate the opportunity to join fellow members of the Chamber of Commerce during these events.

### Spending Time in my Hometown of Plainville

I spent time in my hometown of Plainville this weekend visiting Unrein Drug, Stan's Barbershop, Barry's Building Center, Arnhold's Furniture, Sale Barn Cafe, Crawford Oilfield Supply, and Stahl's Oilfield Service Farm Implement and Supply. Discussions with community members centered on fuel prices, farm disaster, health care, education and textbooks, the English language and beef trade with Japan.

### Accepting Applications for Fall and Spring House of Representatives Page Program

My office is now accepting applications for the U.S. House of Representatives Fall 2006 and Spring 2007 Page Program. The fall semester begins September 5 and concludes January 26, 2007. The spring semester begins January 29 and ends June 8, 2007. Students wishing to be a page must be at least 16 years old and have at least a 3.0 GPA. Applicants

to the Page Program are required to be sponsored by a Member of Congress. Application materials can be obtained through my office and should be returned by Friday, May 12. Interested students should call (202) 225-2715 for more information and a copy of the application. More information about being a page is available at: [http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/ks01\\_moran/](http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/ks01_moran/)

pr042406PageProgram.html

#### In the Office

Kansas Contractors Association representatives, Eugene Beachner of St. Paul, Mike Morrand of Paola, Joe Levens of Wichita and Kevin Kelley of Topeka, were in my office to discuss highway construction. Last year, Congress passed a large surface transportation bill that will help guide highway construction for the next five years. The Kansas Contractors were in to express the need to make sure the highway trust fund, which pays for these projects, is adequately funded for the coming years.

Barbara Atkinson and Marci Nielsen of Kansas City were in the office representing the University of Kansas Medical Center to talk about the importance of National Institutes of Health research funding and the positive impact KU medical students and graduates have on rural health in Kansas. In to voice their support for Kansas State University (K-State) Research and Extension programs and to describe the 4-H Caucus were Ramie Wasinger of Hays, Steve Rome of Hugoton, Dale Fjell of Manhattan, Tandy Rundus of Belleville and Keith VanSlike of Norton.

Joe and Jane Conroy of Emporia and Anne Jack of Andover were in representing the Kansas Association of Nurse Anesthetists. They spoke about the need to reverse future Medicare Part B physician fee cuts, the critical role nurse anesthetists play in rural health care systems, and the importance of education opportunities. Tom Bowsver, Barbara Koirtyohann and Krisi Wyatt from the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce were in the office to discuss the effects of high energy costs, health care challenges, and new industry opportunities.

Mary Arlington of Oakley was in the office to describe the importance of Kansas tourism revenue from Recreational Vehicle parks. Dr. Lisa Freeman, Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Programs at K-State, was in the office to voice her support for the Veterinary Workforce Expansion Act. I also had the opportunity this week to visit with Jeff Slate of Beloit while he was in Washington, D.C., attending a conference.

Jack Taylor of Liberal and Max Zimmerman of Hutchinson stopped by my office to give me an update on the Southwest Passage Initiative for Regional and Interstate Transportation (SPIRIT) of U.S. Highway 54. US-54 is the shortest route in the U.S. from the southwest to the northeast and is the most heavily traveled two-lane highway in the country. SPIRIT's goal is a four-lane corridor from Wichita to El Paso. Currently the organization is in the advanced engineering and construction stage of the section of Highway 54 between Kingman and Pratt.

George Hildebrandt of Leavenworth, Wilbert Howard of Oakley, Rod Bradshaw of Jetmore, Bernard Bates of Hill City, Clarence Syars of Nicodemus, Kenny Wallingford Jr. of Atchison and Sonny Green of Stockton were in the office to discuss issues related to African-American farmers' discrimination claims against USDA and possible legislative solutions to the problem. Richard Lopez of Wichita was in representing SER Corporation to explain its proposal for the next farm bill to train workers to address labor shortages in agriculture.

Kansas Association of Insurance Agents, Larry Magill of Topeka, Daniel Magill of Lawrence, Dan Deener of Arkansas City, Dale Chaffin of Hays, Al Shank of Liberal, Bob Fee of Hutchinson, Dave Long of Caldwell, and Phil Dressen and Mike Chrisman of Wichita, were in to discuss crop and flood insurance along with other issues important to insurance agents.

United Telcom representatives, Dennis Doyle of Blue Valley, Catherine Veach Moyer and Richard Veach of Ulysses, Rhonda Goddard and Glenn Lambert of Hill City, and Craig Mock and Bev Kinkelaar of Dodge City, were in my office to express their support for the Universal Service Fund (USF). The USF was designed to help make sure all Americans can receive telecommunication services at reasonable rates, especially in rural and high cost areas. It also helps provide relief to qualified schools, libraries and rural healthcare providers.

Allan Sents of McPherson was in the office representing the Kansas Cattlemen's Association to discuss current issues facing the cattle industry. Joining Mr. Sents for a tour of the Capitol building after his meeting were family members Deanna, Amy, Clarissa and Norma of McPherson; Evelyn Raab of Topeka; and Eric Sents and Stephanie Walton of Virginia.

Also in my office for a tour of the Capitol were Dale and Sherry Chaffin of Hays with their children, Ashley and Cody; Blaine Spurney and Cara Walker-Spurney of Salina; Kris Schrandt of Glasco; Lisa Fleming of Concordia; and Brandi Heinen of Topeka. I also got to meet with a group from the Lindsborg area who were in for a tour of the Capitol.

Very truly yours,

Jerry