

8/04/2006 Moran to Recognize the Community of Burns

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Presents Residents with "Building Better Communities" Award

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BURNS - Congressman Jerry Moran today announced he will recognize the citizens of Burns for continuing efforts to sustain and revitalize their community with his "Building Better Communities" award. With a population of approximately 450, the citizens of Burns and the surrounding area demonstrate pride in their community through action.

In May, residents transformed the former post office into a new community library and city hall. The Burns Public Library Board raised more than \$95,000 from private sources to cover project expenses, with approximately half coming from local and area residents. In March 2003, a new community center was completed that includes a wellness center, youth room and kitchen. During the center's five-month construction period, crews of volunteers worked on the center on a daily basis.

"This project would have not succeeded without the culture of volunteerism and the acceptance of change and new ideas in the Burns community," Carolyn Koehn, former city clerk said.

In an effort to promote the community, the Burns PRIDE committee sold two-foot tall concrete roosters to local businesses and residents. In all, more than 60 roosters were sold, decorated and are on display. The local Lions Club purchased a four-foot tall rooster that serves as a welcome sign on the way into town.

"The people of Burns are awesome," Barb Stuhlsatz, library board president, said. "They are like a family and whether they still live here or not, they work together to keep Burns a place you want to come home to."

Since 1954, families in Burns have hosted international students in their homes over the Thanksgiving holiday to give them a chance to experience rural, American culture. The community was recognized in 1959 by Vice President Richard Nixon and received a Distinguished Service Award from the Institute of International Education for its embrace of this idea. Over the last 52 years, more than 500 people representing 110 countries have visited Burns.

"Over the course of many years, steps have been taken to ensure the future of Burns is a bright one," Moran said. "Hard work, vision and community support will continue to carry this community forward."

The recognition ceremony for the citizens of Burns will be at 3:15 p.m. on Tuesday, August 15, at Burns Community Center, 203 N. Washington Street, in Burns.

The "Building Better Communities" award was established by Moran to showcase positive community action in Kansas. Beyond providing recognition, this program provides examples of how creative thinking and teamwork make a positive difference in rural America.

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