

12/04/2006 This Week in Congress

This Week in Congress

December 4, 2006

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." I am back in Washington, D.C., this week for what will likely be the final week of the 109th Congress for the House. Congress is expected to pass legislation continuing funding through next year and wrap up several other measures. I hope you find this newsletter useful.

Announcing Eleventh Annual Big First Listening Tour

Next week, I will begin my eleventh annual Big First Listening Tour where I will visit communities in each of the 69 counties of the First District. I am beginning my annual tour now due to the uncertainty of the voting schedule for the beginning of 2007 under the new incoming leadership.

Traveling the state each year on my annual tour has been a great way to spend time with Kansans. I continue this tradition to make sure I know what is on the minds of Kansans and to bring their thoughts and concerns back to Washington, D.C., where I work to address them.

The upcoming tour schedule is below. Visit my website to stay up-to-date on tour stops that are still being scheduled. Area residents are invited to meet with me at any of the stops.

Monday, December 11

Morton County Tour Stop, Elkhart

Time: 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Location: Lions Club, Scout Hut, 201 Main Street

Stanton County Tour Stop, Johnson

Time: 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Location: Johnson County Courthouse, Commissioner's Room, 201 N. Main

Hamilton County Tour Stop, Syracuse

Time: 2:30-3:30 p.m. MST

Location: Courthouse, Commissioner's Room, 219 N. Main

Greeley County Tour Stop, Tribune

Time: 4:00-5:00 p.m. MST

Location: Greeley County Courthouse, Courtroom, 616 2nd

Sherman County Tour Stop, Goodland

Time: 6:30-7:30 p.m. MST

Location: Lions Club, Northwest Kansas Student Union, 1209 Harrison

Tuesday, December 12

Cheyenne County Tour Stop, St. Francis

Time: 8:00-9:00 a.m.

Location: Windmill Restaurant, West US 36 Highway

Rawlins County Tour Stop, Atwood

Time: 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Location: Rawlins County Courthouse, Courtroom, 607 Main

Thomas County Tour Stop, Colby

Time: 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Location: Rotary Club, Colby County Community College Student Union, 1255 S. Range Ave.

Wednesday, December 13

Mitchell County Tour Stop, Beloit

Time: 12:00-1:00 p.m.

Location: Lions Club, North Central Kansas Technical College Cafeteria, 3033 US Highway 24

Asking Incoming Leadership to make Disaster Assistance a Priority in 2007

I have asked for the support of incoming Democratic House leadership in immediately addressing disaster assistance for Kansas farmers and ranchers. Current Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi has announced a list of initiatives the House will consider during the first 100 hours of the next Congress. In a letter to her, I requested that agriculture disaster assistance be addressed in these first 100 hours.

This issue demands immediate attention when the House reconvenes in January. Farmers and ranchers in Kansas and across the country suffered billions of dollars in losses in the 2005 and 2006 crop years as a result of adverse growing conditions. I have seen firsthand the effects of severe weather conditions in Kansas and providing this disaster assistance must be a priority.

To read more on this topic, [click here](#).

Discussing Trade and Energy with South American Agriculture Representatives

Last week, I joined House Agriculture Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte of Virginia and incoming Chairman Collin Peterson of Minnesota for agriculture tours and meetings. During the visit to Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina, we visited with government officials, industry representatives and farmers to discuss trade challenges and opportunities, the use of renewable energy and energy independence, as well as other agriculture issues. We met with Consul Generals and the Agricultural Attaché in Brazil. In Uruguay, I appreciated meeting with the Vice President, the President of the House of Representatives and the Chairman of the Agriculture Committee. In Argentina, we met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Secretary of Foreign Trade, Minister of Economy and Production, and Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food. We were able to get a firsthand view of the competition American farmers are facing from South America. It was also a great opportunity to learn about increasing our use of renewable fuels.

Moving Offices in Washington, D.C.

This week, we are moving offices in Washington, D.C. My office will now be located in 2202 Rayburn House Office Building. The office phone and fax numbers will remain the same. Please continue to contact me as best suits you - whether it is in person or by phone, fax, mail or email. I always appreciate hearing from you.

In the Office

Iral Porter, Ashley DeVilbiss and Dr. Patricia Thomas with the University of Kansas Medical Center were in this week to discuss the need to fund the Centers of Excellence and Health Careers Opportunity programs. Jim French of Partridge stopped by to share what OxFam would like to see in the upcoming farm bill. The Honorable Pat George and his wife Lori of Dodge City also stopped by the office with their children, Thomas, Maris and Anna. In my Washington D.C., office this week for a tour of the Capitol were Steve and Amy Harmon of Emporia, Deb Barnes and Gloria Yates of Junction City, and Kelli Bartlett of Manhattan.

Very truly yours,

Jerry