

2/26/2007 This Week in Congress

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February 26, 2007

Dear Friend,

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

Working to Bring the Bio- and Agro-defense Facility to Kansas

On Thursday, I attended the inaugural meeting of the Kansas National Bio- and Agro-defense Facility (NBAF) Task Force, which was formed to bring the federal research facility to Kansas. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) plans for this 500,000 square foot lab to be a next-generation facility to defend and enhance our nation's agriculture and public health. I was named a member of the task force in January by Governor Kathleen Sebelius.

There are currently 18 sites across the country being considered for the federal research center, including Leavenworth and Manhattan. DHS officials will visit the sites this spring and name the finalists this summer. A final site announcement is expected in 2008. The National Bio- and Agro-defense Facility will be a home for scientists from DHS, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services to research biological and agricultural threats to humans and animals. The task force will promote the state's assets, infrastructure and workforce.

One of the top priorities of our state should be the recruitment of this facility, which will propel Kansas's leadership in bioscience research and provide substantial economic benefits. Competition for the NBAF across the country is fierce and will require the combined efforts of our local, state and federal officials to convince DHS to locate this facility in Kansas. The two sites being considered within Kansas offer unique qualities for advancing this important research. The Biosecurity Research Institute at Kansas State University and the many animal health companies in Kansas make our state an ideal location for the NBAF.

Asking the Secretary of the Army to Support Fort Riley and Fort Leavenworth

This week, I joined Senators Sam Brownback and Pat Roberts and Congressman Todd Tiahrt in asking Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey to prioritize projects at Fort Riley and Fort Leavenworth when distributing funds from the fiscal year 2007 Continuing Resolution. We each opposed this spending bill in part because it did not include money necessary to implement crucial Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) projects at the Kansas bases.

Our state had tremendous success as a result of BRAC. We need to be certain that the funding is available to meet the needs of our soldiers and their mission. It is imperative that projects at Forts Riley and Leavenworth remain on schedule.

[Click here to read the full text of the letter.](#)

Leading the House Hunger Caucus

I was recently named a co-chairman of the House Hunger Caucus. Members of the caucus work to raise awareness about issues surrounding hunger and the important role of American grown agricultural products. In addition to raising awareness, the Hunger Caucus facilitates communication between those working to combat hunger and lawmakers who support the funding to assist those in need. The McGovern-Dole International Food for Education Program is one such program that fights child hunger and poverty by providing nutritious meals to children in schools.

Hunger is a problem in developing countries, as well as in our communities. Whether it is a local family who has fallen on hard times or victims of a hurricane along the Gulf Coast or a famine in Africa, Kansans react with compassion and a genuine desire to see people prosper. Kansas is in a unique position to aid in the fight against hunger with our locally grown food and grains.

Visiting Kansas Universities

Kansas State University: On Monday, I spent time in Manhattan on the K-State campus. I joined Dr. Joe Aistrup for his Kansas Politics class and enjoyed spending time with the students and visiting about current issues in Washington, D.C. Also while on campus, I attended a reception of the Kansas Bar Association at the K-State Alumni Center. I enjoyed seeing many friends and colleagues. That evening, I joined my daughter who is a freshman at K-State for the K-State versus University of Kansas basketball game.

Emporia State University: On Friday, I attended a luncheon at Emporia State University (ESU) honoring students of the

TRIO programs. TRIO programs are federally funded and designed to motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. During the luncheon, I heard many powerful stories from students on how the staff and support services have dramatically changed their lives. Before the luncheon, I was inducted as an honorary member into the ESU Chi Alpha Epsilon National Honor Society, which promotes continued high academic standards and honors academic achievements of developmental education students. Thanks to ESU President Michael Lane, Vice President of Student Affairs James Williams, TRIO Program Director Trudi Benjamin, TRIO Program Associate Director Kristi Bolen and Dr. Elbert Saddler, founder of Chi Alpha Epsilon and Associate Professor of Counseling and Psychological Services at West Chester University, for inviting me to attend these special events. Also while in Emporia, I stopped by the local U.S. Department of Agriculture offices.

Continuing the First District Listening Tour

This week, I visited Council Grove, Strong City, Emporia, Sublette, Cimarron, Jetmore and Hamilton. Today I am in Meade and Seward Counties. [Click here](#) to view times and locations and to stay up-to-date on other tour stops still being scheduled.

In the Office

Fort Leavenworth School District Superintendent Deborah Baeuchle of Fort Leavenworth and Geary County Schools Superintendent Ronald Walker of Junction City were in to discuss the need for Impact Aid and to talk about No Child Left Behind testing standards. Dr. Charles Rice of Manhattan was in with Kansas State University to talk about carbon sequestration and climate change. Barth Crouch of Salina was in with the Playa Lakes Joint Venture to discuss program funding for 2008. In for a tour of the U.S. Capitol building were Galen and Linda Craghead of Alma and Ryan and Erin Inman of Colby.

Very truly yours,

Jerry