

3/31/2008 This Week in Congress

This Week in Congress

March 31, 2008

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." I return to Washington, D.C., today for votes. I hope you find this newsletter useful.

Completing the 2008 Big First Listening Tour

Every year since being elected to Congress, I have traveled to each of the 69 counties of the First District to hear what is on the minds of Kansans and receive my marching orders to take back to Washington, D.C. On Thursday, I completed my annual Big First Listening Tour. I made my final stops this week in Tribune, Syracuse, Lakin, Satanta, Johnson City, Ulysses, Oakley, Scott City and Dighton.

While the issues Kansans talk to me about change from year to year, one thing remains the same: folks want to see good things happen in their communities and their country. In Washington, D.C., I will work to see that Kansans are well served through legislation like the farm bill and by working to improve laws like No Child Left Behind. As we enter the spring and summer months, I am especially concerned with energy prices. We must work in Congress to repeal policies that raise the price of gas and regulations that discourage the development of new fuel sources.

I will be giving a series of speeches in the House of Representatives in the coming weeks about what I heard and learned from Kansans during my tour. I want to make sure rural voices and Kansas common sense are part of the debate on the issues facing our nation.

If there were topics that were not discussed or you were unable to attend, please contact me and share your thoughts through my Web site at www.jerrymoran.house.gov/. It is an honor serving in Congress on behalf of Kansans. Please let me know how I can do a better job working for you.

[Click here to view photos from some of my stops this year.](#)

Attending Groundbreaking and Ribbon Cutting at Smoky Hill Range

On Friday, I was southwest of Salina at Smoky Hill Air National Guard Weapons Range to break ground on a facility for a new Air Guard unit and dedicate a new homeland security training venue. Smoky Hill Range plays an important role in national and homeland defense. These added capabilities will help make the Range one of the top joint training installations in the country.

A new Air Support Operations Squadron (ASOS) facility will serve the Kansas Air Guard's 284th ASOS unit now forming at Salina. Air Support Operations Squadrons link forces operating on the ground to airmen providing close air support. The ASOS will expand the training available for Fort Riley soldiers and others from across the country that use Smoky Hill Range.

I also participated in a ribbon cutting for the Crisis City, a new training area for civilian first responders and the Guard to train in realistic, simulated disaster scenarios to improve disaster response. A railcar venue is the first section of the Crisis City to be completed, and will be followed by a rubble pile and a grain bin for search and rescue training.

I am pleased to see collaboration from all levels of government and from private partners to develop Smoky Hill Range's potential to better support our soldiers and first responders. I look forward to continuing to enhance and highlight this vital training center. [Click here to view photos from the event.](#)

Visiting with Students at Salina South High School

After the dedication ceremony at Smoky Hill, I made a surprise visit to Lisa Mahler's Advanced English class at Salina South High School. Ms. Mahler's students had written me recently and I wanted to give the students a chance to ask any other questions they had. I told the students that their thoughts matter and encouraged them to take an interest in what happens in Washington, D.C. We also talked about the importance of communicating with elected officials. Thanks to Principal Myron Graber for helping arrange my visit. [Click here to view photos from my visit.](#)

Promoting Health and Wellness through Daily Exercise

Once again this year, my staff and I are participating in K-State Research and Extension's 2008 Walk Kansas Fitness Challenge to raise awareness about the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Walk Kansas is a state-wide fitness program where teams track exercise and work to collectively cover the 423-mile distance across Kansas.

I am an advocate for health and wellness programs as a way to reduce health care costs. Exercise is good medicine for our health today and our health for many years to come. The Walk Kansas fitness challenge started on Sunday, March 9 and will last eight weeks. Members of my Kansas and Washington, D.C., offices combined to form two teams. In addition to walking, miles can be tracked through other physical exercise like running, swimming, bicycling or playing team sports.

Learn more about Walk Kansas online at <http://www.walkkansas.org/>.

In the Office

Students J.R. Renner of Spearville and Brooke Goeckel of Hanover were in with the National Youth Leadership Council and Presidential Classroom programs to learn more about my role as a member of Congress. Marla Staab of Hays and Kim Aeillo of Topeka were in with the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association to express the need for Medicare to reimburse speech-language pathologists and talk about the importance of early hearing detection and intervention.

Several Kansans stopped by my Washington, D.C., office this week for a tour of the United States Capitol building. Bryan Thompson of Salina and Anurag Patel, Merica Shrestha and Julius Karash of Kansas City came by, as did Gery, Shirley, Mariah and Landon Skolout of Colby and Brad Sheldon and Sara Dehdashti of Gardner. A group from Lakeside High School in Downs was also in for a tour. The group included Renzo Draayer, Darrin Simmons, Diletta de Leonardis, Hanna Molin, Jane VanDonge and Cory, Charlene and Cala Beougher of Downs; Ryan Debey of Cawker City; Kyle Thompson of Glen Elder; and Michaela Gasper of Tipton.

Very truly yours,

Jerry