

honored at the Kosciuszko House on April 2, I ask my colleagues to join me in extending the Senate's best wishes for continued success to Edward J. Piszek and his family. •

THE MINNESOTA TORNADOS

• Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I rise today to speak for a few minutes about the violent storms of this past weekend in south-central Minnesota and to express my concern for the many, many victims of this tragedy. Tornados and severe thunderstorms ripped through Minnesota Sunday evening, tearing through St. Peter, Hanska, and Lonsdale and forcing the evacuation of the small town of Comfrey.

In the wake of the devastation, my thoughts and prayers go out to the people of south-central Minnesota. I would especially like to express my condolences to the families of Dustin Schneider, the young boy whose life was taken by the storm near St. Peter, and Louis Mosenden of Hanska, who died Monday as a result of injuries he suffered when a tornado hit his home. Our thoughts and prayers are with their loved ones.

Mr. President, along a 60-mile path, hundreds of houses, factories, barns, silos, churches, and schools have been reduced to rubble. Most of the buildings in St. Peter were either destroyed or severely damaged. The smaller community of Comfrey was almost completely destroyed. Power is still out in both towns.

In all, more than 700 houses and apartments were destroyed or damaged to the point that they are now uninhabitable. Another 1,800 have sustained severe damage. Thousands of residents have been forced to go seek public shelters or the homes of friends or relatives. More than 100 businesses have been damaged in the area.

Even with the massive damage, the initial response to this disaster by the State of Minnesota, the Minnesota National Guard, Minnesota relief agencies, and local law enforcement has been swift and efficient. Because of this quick response, and the cooperation we are seeing between state, local, and federal officials, I am confident south-central Minnesota will recover from this natural disaster. I intend to survey the area this weekend, after state and local officials have completed their damage assessments. My staff is already on the scene, and is meeting today with representatives of the Federal Emergency Management Agency in St. Peter as they inspect the damage.

Since first receiving word of the storms, I have been working closely with state and local officials to bring federal assistance to the region and begin the recovery efforts. I want to assure my constituents that the federal government will do whatever is needed to help the people of our state cope with the devastation. Minnesota Governor Arne Carlson today forwarded to President Clinton his formal request for a disaster declaration, and I have

written to the President as well to reiterate the urgency of Governor Carlson's request.

Mr. President, the people of Minnesota have faced disaster before. It was almost one year ago when the terrible spring floods swept through western Minnesota and devastated so many lives. We learned a lot about each other during the difficult months that followed, when it seemed the clean-up would never end and life would never be the same again. We were reminded what it means to be a community, and how communities come together during troubled times.

With that experience fresh in mind, I know that Minnesotans will once step forward and help one another rebuild from this weekend's tornados. And I want the victims of this latest disaster to know that they will not be forgotten. •

TRIBUTE TO ANTHONY HIGDON—41 YEARS OF GOVERNMENT SERVICE

• Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the extraordinary career of Mr. Anthony Higdon, who retired last month after 41 years of service to his country and the people of the Commonwealth of Kentucky as a member of the U.S. Air Force and as an employee of the Social Security Administration.

After four years in the Air Force, Mr. Higdon spent the last 37 years working for the Social Security Administration, serving the needs of Kentucky's senior citizens. His career included 20 years as manager of the 3 Social Security offices in Louisville. Before that, he served in other capacities in the Louisville offices, as well as at the Social Security branches in Elizabethtown, Hazard and Hopkinsville, Kentucky.

One of Mr. Higdon's most important legacies will be his tireless work with national and community leaders in Kentucky to impress upon them an understanding of the dramatic importance of Social Security programs to all people throughout their lives.

Mr. President, Anthony Higdon will be sorely missed by all his friends and colleagues at the Social Security Administration offices across the Commonwealth of Kentucky. As he retires to the community which he has spent most of his life serving, we wish him best of luck and thank him for his service. •

BRIDGEPORT CHARTER TOWNSHIP SESQUICENTENNIAL

• Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a place of great significance in the history of the state of Michigan. Bridgeport Charter Township, located in the heart of Michigan, will celebrate its Sesquicentennial on April 4, 1998. It was founded April 4, 1848, making it the oldest charter township in Michigan.

Bridgeport Charter Township will begin the celebration of its 150th year on April 4, 1998 with a town hall meeting. The celebration will continue

throughout the year with a series of events. They are currently trying to locate ancestors of the original township board to take part in the celebration.

I want to congratulate Bridgeport Charter Township on its Sesquicentennial and extend my best wishes for a successful and enjoyable celebration. •

THE 116TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

• Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the Knights of Columbus and join them in the celebration of 116 years of carrying out their mission of "Unity, Service, and Patriotism." In the fall of 1881, a group of men, under the direction of Father Michael J. McGivney, met at St. Mary's Church in New Haven, Connecticut, for the purpose of establishing a fraternal benefit society within the Catholic Church. That small meeting was the genesis for a movement which now claims nearly 1.6 million members (4.5 million including family members) in countries throughout the Western Hemisphere and the Pacific.

After being granted legal corporation on March 29, 1882, the Knights of Columbus began spreading their message of pride in faith and nation. Indeed, the very name Knights of Columbus was chosen to reflect this premise, as it signifies the importance of Christopher Columbus' discovery of America to the Catholic Church.

In times of national crisis, the Knights of Columbus have consistently heeded the call for service and sacrifice. This was perhaps best exemplified during two of the most pivotal events in our Nation's history which occurred this century: World War I and World War II. During these trying times, the Knights of Columbus offered an array of support programs for the men and women of our armed forces, including bond drives and blood donor programs.

In addition, at the conclusion of World War II and the onset of the Cold War, the Knights of Columbus aided in the crusade against Communist expansion by sponsoring 1,300 educational discussion groups, as well as speakers' bureaus, advertisements and radio addresses. The Knights of Columbus' efforts during the Cold War were acknowledged by President Harry S. Truman.

While those accomplishments are indeed admirable, equally impressive are the often unsung works undertaken by individual Knights of Columbus Councils each day. In 1996, Knights of Columbus members reported 48,966,132 hours of volunteer service and donated \$105,976,102 to charity.

Currently, 229 Knights of Columbus Councils serve parishes and communities throughout my home state of Minnesota. The services undertaken by each Council cover many areas and aid