

The state's gaming commission granted the first license for riverboat gambling in 1995, paving the way for fierce competition for Kentucky's gambling dollar. And Churchill's monopoly on live racing ended in late 2002 when Indiana Downs in Shelbyville, Ind., opened the state's second pari-mutuel track.

But the maturation of Churchill Downs Inc., came in a string of acquisitions that began in the late 1990s. Starting with Ellis Park in 1998, the company bought Calder Race Course in Miami and Hollywood Park in Inglewood, Calif.

A merger with Arlington Park near Chicago in 2000 ballooned Churchill's portfolio to six racetracks in five states, including three in major U.S. markets.

"It was one of those incredible times in business where you actually invent new ways of doing things on the fly," said John Long, chief operating officer at Churchill Downs Inc., from 1999 to 2003.

Churchill's strategy shifted several years ago, considering acquisitions in places where expanded gambling is likely.

Documents filed this week in a Louisiana bankruptcy court show the company made the highest offer in private talks for the Fair Grounds Race Course in New Orleans.

Churchill still could buy the bankrupt New Orleans track at an upcoming bankruptcy auction, a move that would give it winter racing and a facility soon to install hundreds of slot machines.

Meeker is 60 and his contract will be up for renewal in 2006. He's already made money—his salary this year is \$463,499, he got a \$200,000 bonus last year and his Churchill stock is worth more than \$10 million.

He and his wife have a daughter and two grandchildren. But he jokes when asked when he might retire and shrugs off serious talk of retirement for now.

"I want to make sure that when I leave the company," Meeker said, "that it's left at a time when everything is pointing north."

CONGRATULATING INCLINE HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to congratulate Incline High School on its victory in the Nevada "We the People" competition.

This accomplishment reflects not only a lot of hard work by the individual participants but also the strong commitment to academic excellence of all the students, instructors, and administrators of Incline High School.

I am pleased to be able to recognize the individual members of the team on their achievement: Bradley Allured, Jason Beavers, Nicholas Bohn, Jessica Corpuel, Joseph Driver, Alexander Heilig, McKenna Hollingsworth, Joshua Hub, Ansley Kendzioriski, Elisabeth Komito, Ashley Nikkel, Laura Pillsbury, Robert Rappaport, Catherine Serrano, Tira Wickland, and Beate Wolter.

I also note the efforts of their teacher Milton Hyams, their coach Robert Heilig, and their peer tutors: Ashley Hanna, Daniel St. John, and Jonathan Shoop.

I am sure that I speak for the entire Incline High School community in thanking the "We the People" program's district and State coordinators, Dan Wong and Judy Simpson, for their work in helping give the students the opportunity to participate in this great competition.

Created in 1987, "We the People" promotes civic competence and responsibility among our Nation's elementary and secondary students. Its innovative curriculum enhances student understanding of the history, principles, and institutions of American constitutional democracy.

The instructional program culminates in a simulated congressional hearing and a nationwide competitive program for high school students. Attracting the participation of more than 26 million students and 80,000 educators, the "We the People" program has expanded the civic knowledge of our students, cultivated a new generation of leaders, and highlighted the tremendous potential of our Nation's youth.

Please join me in congratulating Incline High School for its commitment to academic excellence, and its victory in the Nevada "We the People" competition.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2003

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. On May 1, 2003, Senator KENNEDY and I introduced the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act, a bill that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

On August 8, 2003, in Grand Rapids, MI, an 18-year-old bisexual man was discovered unconscious with his wrists bound in a ditch. Authorities believe that he had been the victim of a vicious sexual attack. The victim survived on a life-support for two weeks before dying of pneumonia-like symptoms.

I believe that Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

NATIONAL TIRE SAFETY WEEK

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I wanted to take the opportunity today to recognize the importance of tire safety during National Tire Safety Week. The Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Subcommittee on Competition, Foreign Commerce, and Infrastructure, which I chair, has jurisdiction over the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. As such, I am keenly aware of the devastation caused each year on our Nation's highways due to automobile accidents.

The National Tire Safety Week, created by the Rubber Manufacturers Association, is now in its third year, and one of a number of their public outreach campaigns designed to focus our efforts on a key issue for all of us: tire safety.

Tires are clearly a core component of an automobile and a key aspect to ensuring the safety of the occupant. When you stop to think about it, there is only a small patch of rubber on each tire that meets the road at any given moment. That small patch of rubber is responsible for ensuring the automobile maintains control on the roadway. This function must be maintained no matter what weather conditions exist hot or cold, wet or dry, snowy and icy. Tires are an amazing and highly technical feature of an automobile that is often taken for granted.

Just like changing your oil regularly, tires must also be routinely cared for and inspected in order to maintain their safety. Unfortunately, many drivers unwittingly neglect their tires. That is why National Tire Safety Week provides us all with a crucial reminder to do the simple things to ensure that our tires are safe.

The result of unsafe tires is simply devastating. Tire blowouts and hydroplaning cause a driver to lose control of the vehicle, which careens out of control, often smashing into other vehicles or flipping over. Tragically, just 3 weeks ago in a small farming community in southern Oregon, a family of five ranging in age from 2 years to 60 years old was killed instantly when the rear tire of their van blew out and the van veered into the path of an oncoming pickup truck. The family was on a last minute outing to gather Easter supplies for their church.

We don't yet know why the tire blew out. It could have been underinflated. Or perhaps the tread was wearing low or uneven and it was more easily punctured by a sharp object in the road. The bigger question that we need to address now is, could this accident and tragic loss of life have been avoided? Possibly.

With this in mind, I would like to highlight a small Oregon company, Smart Tread, LLC, who has developed a simple visual tread wear identification system. The Smart Tread proposal advocates for an improved visual identification system that would help consumers better understand when their tires are safe and when they are not. One such approach would use color directly in the tire tread turning yellow and/or red when a tire tread reaches a depth like 2/32 of an inch that is no longer safe and is the legal definition of a bald tire. This system will provide early warnings of a car that is out of alignment or running on overinflated or underinflated tires.

It is my hope that industry and consumers will see the benefit of this tread wear identification system that Smart Tread has developed. We need to continue to improve the safety of tires to prevent unanticipated automobile accidents and deaths. Again, I thank the tire manufacturers for all their efforts and continuing to address this important issue.