1950 to 2,083 in 1960. In addition, the number of residents with some college rose from 395 in 1950 to 473 in 1960. By the year 2000, when the census counted 38,628 people living in Atascosa County, over 65 percent of residents age 25 and older had 4 years of high school. Agriculture, government services, and some light manufacturing are key elements of the area's economy. The largest communities in the county are Jourdanton, the county seat, and Pleasanton, the county's largest town. Other communities include Campbellton, Poteet, Lytle, Charlotte, Christine, Leming, MC Coy, Pleasanton. Some of the county's wonderful attractions include the Poteet Strawerry Festival, the Jourdanton Days Celebration, and the Cowboy Homecoming and Rodeo in Pleasanton. As we look back on the last 150 years with pride, we also look forward to a promising future for Atascosa.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to honor Atascosa County on their 150th anniversary and all of their accomplishments.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE LAUNCHING OF THE CARIBBEAN SINGLE MARKET ECONOMY

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL
OF NEW YORK
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Caribbean leaders for their achievement of the Caribbean Single Market Economy and to enter into the RECORD a Caribnews editorial celebrating this milestone. The CSME—the initial phase of a historic regional economic integration project uniting 13 countries within the Caribbean—culminates a movement that was years in the making.

With the creation of this newest trade bloc that includes Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, the countries have agreed to lift tariffs and allow all citizens to open businesses. In conjunction with Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the countries will also be able to provide services and move capital throughout the single market.

The implications of the CSME are sweeping, plans advancing to replace national travel documents with a regional passport and the possibility of a common currency to be used by participating countries and a consolidation of economic policies.

The CSME is a fitting and progressive response to the evolving global environment characterized by disappearing borders. I have full faith that CSME will create a larger spectrum of opportunities for employment, investment, production and trade for the people of the Caribbean islands. The coming together of regional economies into one bloc will undoubtedly give the countries strength in facing other trade blocs and superpowers across the negotiating tables.

Mr. Speaker, please join me again in congratulating the leaders of the participating bean nations for forging ahead with the CSME and wishing them well in their next steps.

CARIBBEAN SINGLE MARKET: SEALED, SHOTED AND DELIVERED

"Sealed," states the front-page newspaper headline in the Caribbean on Tuesday morning.

"Caribbean leaders sign on formal document," hailed another paper.

And a third publication completed the process when it made clear that the pact had been "delivered.

In effect, the Caribbean Single Market, the long awaited important step towards deep economic and social integration had moved closer. The Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) leaders signed on the dotted line on Monday, committing their countries to be bound by and live up to the provisions of the treaty establishing the CSME.

The signing took place, quite appropriately, on the Mona campus of the University of the West Indies, the quintessential Caribbean educational institution, and the occasion wasn’t simply historic but vital if the countries of the region are to realize their full potential.

Admittedly, there were some unfortunate aspects of the ceremony. One of them was a hard fact of Caribbean life: at least one nation, the Bahamas, opted out all together while Haiti, a country in chaos with a dysfunctional interim government wasn’t invited to the party. Another setback, of sorts was the decision by the members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States to push back the deadline for their implementation of the CSM. Originally, the deadline was January 1, then it was moved to March and now we are being told that it would be the end of June. Don’t be surprised if the OECS countries demand another extension.

The countries are moving ahead with the CSME, are Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the OECS nations are coming on board during the second half of the year.

The pact, a work in progress, calls for the removal of all tariffs on imports in goods and services, limited freedom of movement by a handful of skilled people, such as UWI graduates, sports figures and journalists, the setting of a regional standard for goods being produced in or entering the region from other countries and recognition of Caribbean Court of Justice. Eventually, it could result in a common currency and the harmonization of economic policies.

What it wouldn’t involve is a political union.

These desirable and important objectives should become a reality by 2008, the year when the CSME should become fully implemented. The complications of the CSME are sweeping, plans advancing to replace national travel documents with a regional passport and the possibility of a common currency to be used by participating countries and a consolidation of economic policies.

The CSME is a fitting and progressive response to the evolving global environment characterized by disappearing borders. I have full faith that CSME will create a larger spectrum of opportunities for employment, investment, production and trade for the people of the Caribbean islands. The coming together of regional economies into one bloc will undoubtedly give the countries strength in facing other trade blocs and superpowers across the negotiating tables.

Mr. Speaker, please join me again in congratulating the leaders of the participating bean nations for forging ahead with the CSME and wishing them well in their next steps.

SUPPORT FOR ANIMAL FIGHTING PROHIBITION ENFORCEMENT ACT

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 16, 2006

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my support for H.R. 817, the Animal