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 Campbelton, Poteet, Lytle, Charlotte, Christine, Leming, McCoy and Santa Rosa. Some of the county’s wonderful attractions include the Poteet Strawberry 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. 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 region in a common currency and the harmonization 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 undeniably 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, SHONED 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 “deliberately drafted to have a second life.”

In effect, the Caribbean Single Market, the long awaited important step towards deep economic and social integration had moved a giant step forward.

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, faced in a country in chaos with a dysfunctional interim government wasn’t invited to the party. Another setback, of sorts, was the decision of several members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States to push back the deadline for their implementation of the CSME. 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 barriers to trade 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 impetus is to estimate the complexity and the challenges the region faces as it moves forward.

Jamaica’s Prime Minister, P.J. Patterson, underscored that point when he cautioned the leaders and others at the signing ceremony “formidable challenges still exist as we move boldly forward in the pursuit of closer regional collaboration within a global economy that is admittedly hostile to the interest of small island developing nations.”

The problem for small states is that global competitiveness is often a zero-sum game; growth, slowdown social development and diminish competitiveness. As if those weren’t bad enough, the mountains of red tape and the foot-dragging by some countries can reduce the CSME’s effectiveness and appeal.

But there is little reason to despair.

When Caribbean Free Trade Agreement, CARIFTA, the forerunner of CARICOM and CSME, it started with three countries—Antigua, Barbados and Guyana. The list grew in later years. That’s likely to happen with the CSME.

Secondly, the Caribbean Court of Justice is now a functioning judicial body. Yes, it’s true that only his last resort, the CCJ, their court of last resort, rekindling the necessity to turn to the Privy Council in London as the final arbiter. Again, foot-dragging is standing in the way of a broader court. Political considerations in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago have turned out to be an expansion but that’s not the case in the OECS.

A word about the OECS and its reasons for not signing the final acceptance on Monday. The members are pushing for the creation of a Caribbean Development Fund, which would help bridge the gap in finance, which the elimination of tariffs by the members of the OECS that’s a realistic situation, one that the larger economies have recognized and are trying to solve. The Fund must be established, no ifs, ands or buts.

Interestingly, Edwin Carrington, CARICOM’s long-serving Secretary-General, in his speech on Monday borrowed from the lyrics of one of Bob Marley’s most popular songs, “One Love,” and invoked the memory of that great Caribbean icon when he insisted “Let’s get together and feel alright, I say let’s stay together and be all right.”

We may be some distance away from achieving that libraries will support specific collection development projects that advance the mission, priority areas or, and goals of the selected library.

The purpose of the award is to help provide meaningful support for development projects, retrospective collection development projects, or routine collection building needs.

The library proclaimed the first place with the College State School Library in Anchorage, Alaska. Both schools were presented this award on January 22, 2006.

The library will be creating the prize money to the—“Sit! Stay!! READ!!! Program.” This program is designed to help kids with reading disabilities. Working in conjunction with Delta Society trained dogs, the program pairs children with a pet, which helps the children relax and improve their confidence. This creates a non-judgmental audience and thus a lighter stress load on the children allowing them to truly embrace and improve their skills.

I extend my sincere congratulations to the Flower Mound Public Library for their contributions to the community and youth education as well as their dedication to excellence. This truly original program deserves much applause.

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