

From November 27 through November 29, 2005, severe winter storms swept through much of eastern South Dakota. President Bush declared 42 primary and contiguous counties as emergency designations. In Hamlin and Deuel Counties, 30 percent of producers' alfalfa and winter wheat were lost in that particular blizzard.

Western South Dakota was hit with severe blizzard conditions on April 18 and 19, 2006, dropping as much as 24 inches of snow. Harding, Meade, Haakon, and Butte counties were among those hardest hit by the spring blizzard, with the total estimate of livestock losses at approximately 11,732. Harding County experienced the worst losses. According to the Harding County FSA office, 60 of the 300 producers contacted reported losses totaling 2,500 cows and calves and 6,000 sheep. For one producer in northwest Harding County, about one-third of his herd died when between 450 and 500 of his sheep piled up against a fence and suffocated. Butte County also sustained significant losses to their livestock herd.

I briefly described the agricultural conditions South Dakota's family farmers and ranchers have faced over the last year and a half. The counties I described are merely a snapshot of the reality that our producers experience following a natural disaster. In some cases, disasters are limited to portions of one county, while other disasters span large parts of the state, affecting all producers.

Every farmer or rancher knows that each production year is a gamble with Mother Nature. Unfortunately, all too often most producers at some point lose this gamble and suffer the devastating effects of a natural disaster. I understand the financial and emotional hardships that this places on many family operations' struggle to survive. Because agriculture is the driving force behind South Dakota's economy, it is crucial that producers receive the resources necessary to recover from their losses.

In response to the many natural disasters that producers throughout the country have suffered, Senator KENT CONRAD and I introduced the Emergency Agricultural Disaster Assistance Act of 2006 on March 16, 2006. Our relief package would provide emergency production loss and economic assistance to agricultural producers for losses sustained during the 2005 production year. Assistance for crop production losses, livestock assistance, supplemental nutrition, and economic disaster assistance to aid with rapidly-increasing production input costs are included in our bill. In addition, a number of provisions in the bill address agricultural recovery in the areas affected by Hurricane Katrina.

Senators KENT CONRAD, BYRON DORGAN and I worked to fold our stand-alone bill into the larger spending bill, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, H.R. 4939. On May 4, 2006,

the Senate passed the \$109 billion emergency funding package, of which \$3.9 billion would be used for agriculture disaster relief. As a negotiator in the conference consideration of the bill, I fought to secure meaningful disaster aid for producers. However, House leadership demonstrated their priorities, leaving America's family farmers and ranchers out to dry yet again. The conference report that was presented to the committee contained only money for Hurricane Katrina-related agriculture disaster—not a penny was included to provide relief for the flooding and drought conditions that have plagued so many of our producers in 2005.

While this administration insists that the 2005 crop year was outstanding, if not a record-breaking year, the disaster situations I just described indicate otherwise. This agreement was a raw deal for our producers and a raw deal for our rural communities.

FEDERAL INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS AND SAFETY ACT

Mrs. CLINTON. Despite the fact that there has been progress on the issue of interoperability, such as the transfer of much needed spectrum for first responder communications and the allocation of \$1 billion for interoperability grants that passed last year, it is clear that incidents like Hurricane Katrina demonstrate that there remains more work to be done.

What I am concerned about is that 5 years after 9/11, I do not believe that there has been the leadership role at the Federal level to give this issue the full attention and high profile that it demands.

I believe we need an office at DHS that will be charged with continually analyzing, continually assessing, and continually thinking about how to coordinate not only the Federal agencies that manage and operate communications systems, but the local and State governments, who often have very different ideas of what interoperability means.

Additionally, we also need to give that office the resources and authority it needs to carry out its mission.

We have ostensibly given the leadership role of one of the most critical issues to emerge from 9/11 and Katrina to the SAFECOM Office within DHS. However, it is my understanding that this office has fewer than 10 full-time employees and for all intents and purposes is buried within the DHS bureaucracy. While I understand that this office is headed and staffed by dedicated professionals, how do we provide the Federal leadership necessary with fewer than 10 people?

SAFECOM, according to its own Director, needs more authority in funding decisions and its interactions with other agencies.

We have got to get serious about this matter, and I believe that legislation I have recently introduced, S. 3172, the

Federal Interoperable Communications Act of 2006, takes us a step in that direction and I would like to thank Senators SALAZAR and DURBIN for cosponsoring my legislation.

My bill is not radical in how it is put together nor does it espouse to have the latest technology that will solve the interoperability problem once and for all. But it does put forth a blueprint in how the Federal Government can utilize all of the assets at its disposal and ensure that there is clear accountability and leadership on this issue at the Federal level.

It creates an interoperability czar who would report directly to the Secretary of Homeland Security. It also puts that czar in charge of a central interoperability office and gives it a clear mission, outlines responsibilities and expectations, and allows it to get the resources it would need to carry out its mission.

It requires the development of a national strategy, which would include an inventory that identifies the channels and frequencies used in every Federal agency and keeps track of what is being used by the State and local officials, so that when first responders from the Federal Government or other jurisdictions respond to an incident, they will know what frequencies and radios are being used.

This strategy sets clear benchmarks to ensure that we are constantly evaluating our capabilities and adjusting our strategies accordingly to changes in threats, advancements in technology and other factors.

My bill would also help ensure that the money that we are spending now on interoperability grants is being spent wisely and efficiently by ensuring that the grant guidelines are consistent with the goals and mission of the Office of Emergency Communication and that grant recipients have submitted a statewide interoperability plan or have adopted national consensus standards of how their platforms will work.

There have been dozens of first responders, emergency support providers, and Federal, State, and local officials who have testified before Congress, where they have cited the need for consistency in Federal grant guidelines and clarity in the DHS mission for a national emergency communications plan, and my bill seeks to address those concerns.

My bill also will help ensure that there is always an open line of communication between the State and local governments, the private sector, and the Interoperability Czar by creating regional working groups that include virtually every entity with an interest in communications policy that can report the specific needs and progress in a region.

Finally, the bill also creates an Emergency Communications Preparedness Center which will be a consortium of all the Federal agencies that have

focused on interoperable communications, namely the FCC, DHS, Commerce, DOD, and the Justice Department. I envision that this would be the Federal clearinghouse which would help ensure that these agencies which have access to the latest technologies and innovative strategies in interoperable communications can share and coordinate that information and technology to the benefit of the State and local agencies they work with.

I also have provisions that will help facilitate the creation of a national and interoperable alert warning system.

Basically, this bill boils down to providing the leadership needed at the top level to ensure that the technologies, best practices, and resources are flowing to the men and women on the ground.

One of the key recommendations of the 9/11 Commission was to deploy interoperable communications for all of our Nation's first responders. Indeed, this is an enormous, difficult, and complicated task, which requires and demands the immediate and coordinated attention of our Federal Government. My legislation will help ensure that this critical issue gets the attention that it deserves.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HONORING TERRENCE J. LEARY

• Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I am pleased to pay tribute to Terrence J. Leary, who has served as president and CEO of the Harmony Hill School in Glocester, RI, for the last 29 years. In all, he has worked at Harmony Hill for 40 years having begun his career as a teacher and then serving as education director under the school's founders, Edward and Laura Spring.

Terry has built upon the legacy of the Springs and led Harmony Hill to national status with a program providing an environment in which at-risk youth can prosper. In January 2000, Terry received the National Association of Private Schools for Exceptional Children's Executive of the Year Award for his outstanding contributions to private special education.

Terry Leary has served on many civic and charitable boards, including the Rhode Island Council for Exceptional Children, Big Brothers of Rhode Island, and the Lions Club of Smithfield, RI.

Terry's wife, Linda Leary, is a special education teacher in Lincoln, RI, and they have a daughter, Kara, a student at Gallaher Middle School in Smithfield.

Mr. President, Terry Leary's compassionate leadership at the Harmony Hill School is an inspiration for all who work in the field of education, and I ask unanimous consent that his achievement be recognized at an appropriate place in the RECORD.●

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF MAX, NORTH DAKOTA

• Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize a community in North Dakota that will be celebrating its 100th anniversary. On June 30–July 2, the residents of Max will gather to celebrate their community's history and founding.

The community of Max began its century in the heartland on August 8, 1906, when it was platted by J.G. Sheldrick. The town gained its unusual name because when people would come to the post office, a shaver named Max would jokingly ask if they were coming to his post office. The name Max's Post Office stuck and was later transferred to the town.

Max prides itself on community involvement. The Community Enterprises, a group that invests in and sustains local businesses, has helped keep this small town vibrant. The annual "Great Plunge" is an example of the lively, fun-loving spirit in Max. In this event, the community places a large Dr. Pepper can on an ice-covered pond. Tickets are sold with the day and time the ice will melt, causing the can to fall into the pond.

The community has planned a wonderful weekend celebration to commemorate its 100th anniversary. Events include a street dance, children's activities, skits, presentations and fireworks.

I ask the Senate to join me in congratulating Max, ND, and its residents on their first 100 years and in wishing them well through the next century. By honoring Max and all the other historic small towns of North Dakota, we keep the great pioneering frontier spirit alive for future generations. It is places such as Max that have helped to shape this country into what it is today, which is why this fine community is deserving of our recognition.

Max has a proud past and a bright future.●

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF HANNAFORD, NORTH DAKOTA

• Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize a community in North Dakota that will be celebrating its 100th anniversary. On June 30–July 1, the residents of Hannaford will gather to celebrate their community's history and founding.

Hannaford is a Community of Progress and Proud Heritage, located in the heart of east-central North Dakota. Since the day of its founding by Jules M. Hannaford the community has been small but very active.

Hannaford has plenty to offer its residents and visitors. There is always something to do, from visiting the park, to bowling, hunting, and playing around at the baseball complex.

The community has planned a wonderful weekend celebration to commemorate its 100th anniversary. The celebration preparation includes a

bingo fundraiser, a 2002 Centennial Historical Book sale, and a cookbook sale. The money raised will be used for the celebration festivities.

I ask the Senate to join me in congratulating Hannaford, ND, and its residents on their first 100 years and in wishing them well through the next century. By honoring Hannaford and all the other historic small towns of North Dakota, we keep the great pioneering frontier spirit alive for future generations. It is places such as Hannaford that have helped to shape this country into what it is today, which is why this fine community is deserving of our recognition.

Hannaford has a proud past and a bright future.●

HONORING RAY DOOLEY

• Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, earlier this year Boston lost a legendary political organizer, Mr. Ray Dooley, whose passion and intelligence lifted Massachusetts and everyone who worked with him. I ask unanimous consent that the remarks I delivered at his memorial service be printed in the RECORD:

The information follows.

Anne, Catroina, Conor, and Brian, in the time since your husband and father was taken from all of us, but especially was taken too soon from you who loved him best and needed him most, people across Massachusetts and Ireland have rightfully remembered Ray's social conscience, his decency, his strength, his wisdom, and his judgment.

Each of these qualities of character ought to be especially celebrated because they are as suddenly rare in public life as they were abundant in Ray Dooley.

But they don't tell us the something about Ray which brought so many of us in this room together time and again, from movements to end an unjust war, to the march for civil rights, to Ray Flynn and City Hall, to hard fought, bare knuckled Senate races in 1984 and 1996 in which Ray took center stage. I know better than anyone that they wouldn't have ended in victory without him.

Ray lived out what Winston Churchill's political right hand R.A. Butler knew: "Politics is largely a matter of heart."

But more than that even, Ray Dooley taught a generation of politicians and political organizers that idealists could be tough as nails—and that there was nobility in fighting your heart out on the political field. He shattered anyone's illusion that liberals were fuzzy headed bleeding hearts out of the Ivy Tower who floated above the fray. Ray was never defensive about being 'in politics'—he was proud of it, he wore his passion for the game on his sleeve. He was gutsy, determined, and in the finest sense of the phrase, a true believer. Ray showed us all how to win a campaign and keep your conscience.

Harry Truman, who rose through the ranks came of age of Kansas City's