

region of Iowa which showcases over 100 farms, agribusiness and heritage sites to a world wide audience.

The Silos and Smokestacks program boasts over \$1.2 million in Federal grants awarded with a match from our local Iowa communities of \$8.3 million. Of these grants, 27 were awarded to schools allowing 1,619 students to learn about Iowa's heritage.

With the increased funding authorized in this legislation for the existing National Heritage Areas, over 300,000 students in the Silos and Smokestacks area will have a chance to learn about Iowa's agricultural history and heritage. I urge my colleagues to support this culturally important legislation.

HONORING THE WEST SIDE
VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 30, 2007

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor the members of the West Side Volunteer Fire Department for their selfless dedication and bravery in protecting our families, day and night.

The West Side Volunteer Fire Department was established on April 1, 1994. A State grant provided 12 sets of bunker gear and pagers. West Side Volunteer Fire Department responds to incidents including structure fires, trash or brush fires, vehicle fires, accidents with injuries, and EMS First Responder calls.

Without volunteer fire halls, like West Side, many places in the Sixth District would lack effective fire protection. In the State of Tennessee, over 70 percent of fire service is provided by volunteers. Among these volunteers, almost 75 percent work other daily jobs.

Ensuring our families' safety is not without risk. Sadly, an average of two firefighters die each year in Tennessee in the line of duty. In 2005, the Tennessee Fire Services and Code Academy dedicated a memorial on their main campus in Bell Buckle to honor those Tennessee firefighters who have died in the line of duty.

For their willingness to serve, the following members of the West Side Volunteer Fire Department deserve recognition: Chief John Naylor, Assistant Chief Paul Simon, Captain Jack Barton, Matt Studd, Scott Tresler, Jeremy Genter, Jeremy Vassar, Jeff Smith, Dale Fulghum, Donnie Simon, Ashley Powell, and Nicholas Barton.

HONORING THE WESTMORELAND
VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 30, 2007

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor the members of the Westmoreland Volunteer Fire Department for their selfless dedication and bravery in protecting our families, day and night.

The Westmoreland Volunteer Fire Department was organized in 1958. The department members logged over 1,600 training hours in

2006, and the department responded to 148 calls for fire and rescue services and assistance on emergency medical situations. The department has 23 members.

Without volunteer fire halls, like Westmoreland, many places in the Sixth District would lack effective fire protection. In the State of Tennessee, over 70 percent of fire service is provided by volunteers. Among these volunteers, almost 75 percent work other daily jobs.

Ensuring our families' safety is not without risk. Sadly, an average of two firefighters die each year in Tennessee in the line of duty. In 2005, the Tennessee Fire Services and Code Academy dedicated a memorial on their main campus in Bell Buckle to honor those Tennessee firefighters who have died in the line of duty.

For their willingness to serve, the following members of the Westmoreland Volunteer Fire Department deserve recognition: Chief Mark Jenkins, Asst. Chief Tim Shelton, Scott Vantrease, Rick Myers, Phil Crook, Kevin Bandy, Todd Camp, Jon Pullen, Christina Pullen, Tim Reagan, Brad Penick, Eric Harrison, Jason Graves, Larry Gross, Tommy Kirby, Brandon Gross, Sean Milam, Brandon Carter, Jermy Akins, Brent Simons, Greg Carr, Megan Harrison, Devin Branham, and Troy Moss.

THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY BRIDGE
RECONSTRUCTION AND INSPEC-
TION ACT OF 2007

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 30, 2007

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Speaker, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DeFAZIO), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, and I introduce the "National Highway Bridge Reconstruction and Inspection Act of 2007", which will improve the safety of Federal-aid highway bridges, strengthen bridge inspection standards and processes, and increase investment in the reconstruction of structurally deficient bridges on the National Highway System.

The tragic collapse of the I-35W Bridge, which occurred in my home state of Minnesota on August 1, 2007, demonstrates the need to make a commitment to invest in the maintenance and reconstruction of our nation's infrastructure. Many facilities are being stretched to the limit of their design life and beyond.

Of the 594,101 bridges in the National Bridge Inventory, 26.2 percent of America's bridges—more than one in four—are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. There are 73,784 structurally deficient bridges and 80,317 functionally obsolete bridges. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), more than \$65 billion could be invested immediately in a cost-beneficial way to address existing bridge deficiencies.

We must take action to put in place a framework to address this situation, and ensure that the safety and structural integrity of the nation's highway bridges do not continue to deteriorate.

Since the collapse of the I-35W Bridge, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit have conducted in-depth hearings into

the Highway Bridge Program and the National Bridge Inspection Program. During those hearings, we have found a number of significant problems that must be addressed to ensure the overall safety of the nation's highway bridges. The National Highway Bridge Reconstruction and Inspection Act of 2007 establishes a framework for risk-based prioritization of bridge infrastructure investments and ensures that the limited resources available today will reach those facilities most in need of repair.

The National Highway Bridge Reconstruction and Inspection Act require the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to immediately update the National Bridge Inspection Standards to establish uniformity among States in conducting inspections and evaluations. The bill also strengthens training, certification, and qualification requirements for all highway bridge inspectors.

The bill requires States to inspect structurally deficient bridges each year using the best practicable technologies and methods. All other bridges would be required to be inspected every 2 years. The legislation allows FHWA to extend the biennial inspection requirements if FHWA determines that granting the extension will increase the overall safety of the State's bridge inventory.

In response to concerns raised in a U.S. Department of Transportation Inspector General report, the bill requires States to calculate the load rating for highway bridges that have a structural deficiency in a load-carrying member and ensures that the safe load-carrying capacity for such bridges is properly posted.

Our legislation also requires the Department of Transportation to conduct a risk-based prioritization for the reconstruction of deficient Federal-aid highway bridges. The National Academy of Sciences would then independently review the process of prioritization to ensure that investment and resource decisions are based on need, not politics.

The bill also calls on States to develop a 5-year performance plan for the inspection of highway bridges and the reconstruction of structurally deficient and functionally obsolete Federal-aid highway bridges. The performance plans will provide a roadmap for addressing bridge needs, and will ensure greater accountability.

The bill authorizes an additional \$2 billion for reconstruction of structurally deficient bridges on the National Highway System. These funds are in addition to funds authorized for the Highway Bridge Program under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users. These funds are distributed to the States by formula, and Congressional or Administration earmarks are specifically prohibited.

Finally, the bill limits the transferability of Highway Bridge funds. The funds authorized by this bill are not transferable to other Federal-aid highway programs. In addition, the bill provides that a State may transfer Highway Bridge Program funds to other Federal-aid Highway programs only if the State demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Secretary that the State has no structurally deficient Federal-aid highway bridges. This "fix-it-first" approach will ensure that bridge program funds are utilized as intended by Congress in SAFETEA-LU—to improve the safety of highway bridges.

The bridge collapse of August 1, 2007, has served as a wake-up call for many policy-makers and leaders around the country. We must take the lessons of the I-35W Bridge, and use them to create an accountable and reliable bridge program that guards the safety of all users. The National Highway Bridge Reconstruction and Inspection Act of 2007, which Mr. DEFAZIO and I introduce today, begins the process of ensuring that such a tragedy will not happen again.

HONORING THE SOUTHEAST
COMMUNITY FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 30, 2007

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor the members of the Southeast Community Fire Department for their selfless dedication and bravery in protecting our families, day and night.

The Southeast Community Fire Department is made up of 41 volunteers, including 9 board members, and serves over 10,000 people. The department responds to fires, motor vehicle crashes, medical calls, and other service calls. In 2005, the Southeast Community Fire Department responded to nearly 450 calls.

Without volunteer fire halls, like Southeast, many places in the Sixth District would lack effective fire protection. In the State of Tennessee, over 70 percent of fire service is provided by volunteers. Among these volunteers, almost 75 percent work other daily jobs.

Ensuring our families' safety is not without risk. Sadly, an average of two firefighters die each year in Tennessee in the line of duty. In 2005, the Tennessee Fire Services and Code Academy dedicated a memorial on their main campus in Bell Buckle to honor those Tennessee firefighters who have died in the line of duty.

For their willingness to serve, the following members of the Southeast Community Fire Department deserve recognition: Chief Mickey Summers, Asst. Chief Henry Thayer, Capt. Terry Turner, Engineer William Summers,

Rodney Pryor, Raymond Summers, Billy Templeton, Randy Thaxton, Sam Clark, Aaron Bruce, David Kellogg, Charlie Johnson, Ken Weidner, Tommy Dale, Rich Goddard, Sonny Briggance, Luke McKnight, Brandon Clark, Rick Donley, Darrell Templeton, Chasey McKnight, Johnny Smith, James Civils, Lee Daniels, Steven Johnson, Patrick Foster, Aaron Kinser, Jamie Blair, John Reeser, Micheal Webb, and Kyle Withers.

HONORING THE SOUTH CARTHAGE
VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 30, 2007

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor the members of the South Carthage Volunteer Fire Department for their selfless dedication and bravery in protecting our families, day and night.

The South Carthage Fire Department has operated from the same fire station, located on Main St., next to City Hall, since it was founded in 1963. The department has serviced the community for 44 years.

Without volunteer fire halls, like South Carthage, many places in the Sixth District would lack effective fire protection. In the state of Tennessee, over 70 percent of fire service is provided by volunteers. Among these volunteers, almost 75 percent work other daily jobs.

Ensuring our families' safety is not without risk. Sadly, an average of two firefighters die each year in Tennessee in the line of duty. In 2005, the Tennessee Fire Services and Code Academy dedicated a memorial on their main campus in Bell Buckle to honor those Tennessee firefighters who have died in the line of duty.

For their willingness to serve, the following members of the South Carthage Volunteer Fire Department deserve recognition: Chief Ed Lankford, Asst. Chief Tony Hembree, Captain A Team Blythe Myers, Bobby Hewitt, Richard Ellenburg, Scottie Grisham, David McCall, Captain B Team Grover Ellenburg Jr., John Antle, Todd Currie, Tracy Fields, Chris Dennis,

Alicia Fields, Derrick Brooks, David Brown, Brian Owensby, Aaron Sterling, Ricky Slack, Safety and Training Officer Terry Wood, Kennie Bryant, and James Way. Reserve Fire Department Members: Steven Myers, Chris Fields, Jonas Bullington, and Johnny Richardson.

HONORING THE SMITH COUNTY
VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 30, 2007

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor the members of the Smith County Volunteer Fire Department for their selfless dedication and bravery in protecting our families, day and night.

The Smith County Volunteer Fire Department was founded in 1986. Volunteers contracted a building, and the community bought a surplus Tennessee Air National Guard Dodge power wagon with a 250-gallon fiberglass tank. The department has nine active members.

Without volunteer fire halls, like Smith County, many places in the Sixth District would lack effective fire protection. In the State of Tennessee, over 70 percent of fire service is provided by volunteers. Among these volunteers, almost 75 percent work other daily jobs.

Ensuring our families' safety is not without risk. Sadly, an average of two firefighters die each year in Tennessee in the line of duty. In 2005, the Tennessee Fire Services and Code Academy dedicated a memorial on their main campus in Bell Buckle to honor those Tennessee firefighters who have died in the line of duty.

For their willingness to serve, the following members of the Smith County Volunteer Fire Department deserve recognition: Chief Ronnie Jackson, Asst. Chief John Robinson, Gerald Bush, George Eisenbach, Josh Collins, Mike Posey, Jake Watts, Eddie Barnes, and Josh Tisdale.