

Requesting Entity: RE Water at 320 Northwest St. West Salem, IL 62476.

Funding would be used to expand service to rural water customers in Richland County.

The Account: Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies, Higher Education.

Requesting Entity: Southeastern Illinois College, 3575 College Road in Harrisburg, IL 62946.

Funding to purchase materials to set up a new training program for students in mining and mining safety measures.

The Account: Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies, Higher Education.

Requesting Entity: Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, University Park Drive in Edwardsville, IL 62046.

The funding would be used to purchase advanced fabrication, analytical, and processing equipment to enhance SIAM capabilities.

The Account: Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, Federal Highway Administration.

Requesting Entity: Illinois Department of Transportation, 2300 S. Dirksen Parkway in Springfield, IL.

The funding would be used for the design, engineering, land acquisition and planning of the Godfrey Crosstown Connector project in conjunction with US67.

The Account: Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, Federal Highway Administration.

Requesting Entity: Illinois Department of Transportation, 2300 S. Dirksen Parkway in Springfield, IL.

The funding would be used for the design, engineering, land acquisition, and planning for expansion of Rt 162 from Maryville toward Troy, IL.

The Account: Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, Federal Highway Administration.

Requesting Entity: Illinois Department of Transportation, 2300 S. Dirksen Parkway in Springfield, IL.

The funding would be used for the resurfacing and the expansion of Mt. Erie-Golden Gate Road in Wayne County.

The Account: Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, EDI.

Requesting Entity: Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, 1 Old State Capitol Plaza, Springfield, IL.

The funding would be used in the renovation of the Tinsley Project for upcoming Lincoln Bicentennial. The Tinsley project needs to be overhauled to be historically accurate.

The Account: Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, EDI.

Requesting Entity: Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission at 200 S. 9th St in Springfield, Illinois.

The funding would be used to institute a redevelopment plan for Macarthur Blvd between 172 and S. Grand.

LEONARD ABESS, JR.

**HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 24, 2009*

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Leonard Abess, Jr. a

Miami, Florida banker who openhandedly and unselfishly took \$60 million out of his own pocket to give bonuses to former employees and the current staff on the payroll at City National Bank of Florida to thank them for their years of service.

Current chairman and CEO of City National Bank of Florida, Mr. Abess made the decision after selling a majority stake in Miami-based City National Bancshares in November 2008. He took \$60 million of the proceeds and gave it to his tellers, bookkeepers and clerks. All 399 workers on the staff received bonuses. Additionally, Mr. Abess tracked down 72 former employees so they could share in the windfall. Some longtime employees received bonuses based on years of service which amounted to tens of thousands of dollars, in some cases more than \$100,000.

In April 2008, Mr. Abess announced that Caja Madrid, the second-largest bank in Spain, was buying City National for \$1 billion. With more than \$2.75 billion in assets, City National ranked among the largest community banks in the country and was one of the few remaining independent banks in Florida.

When Abess said, "We want to be the biggest bank in Florida . . . I'm not walking away from my customers or employees,"—he kept his word. The deal would allow Mr. Abess to continue to run the bank and retain his title, as well as a 17 percent stake. Most importantly, local City National offices did not close and were not sold off.

Mr. Abess' selfless generosity proved that although we are currently in an era of economic downfalls, unethical behavior and corporate conspiracy, one can still stand strong on their own charitable, altruistic morality. Now, Mr. Abess will receive a prized bonus of his own when he will have the opportunity to watch President Barack Obama's speech to a joint session of Congress from First Lady Michelle Obama's box on February 23, 2009. Ms. Geneva Lawson, a 51 year employee at City National Bank of Florida, will also accompany Mr. Abess to see history in the making.

It is an honor to have the privilege to recognize this valued leader before the United States House of Representatives. I salute Mr. Leonard Abess, Jr. on behalf of his selfless deed and great acts of gratitude, and believe that all Americans can learn from his benevolence, commitment and passion. I wish him every happiness and success.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF KOREAN AMBASSADOR TAE-SIK LEE

**HON. ENI F. H. FALEOMAVAEGA**

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 24, 2009*

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and bid farewell to my friend, Ambassador Tae-Sik Lee, who since 2005 has represented his country, the Republic of Korea, in Washington.

Ambassador Lee first served as a diplomat in Washington in the early 1980s and later earned a degree from the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. After serving in numerous posts in Seoul and other world capitals, his return to Washington nearly four years ago was in many ways a homecoming.

While I would like to dwell on Ambassador Lee's series of distinguished positions in service to his country—Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ambassador to the Court of St. James in London, Ambassador to Israel, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Director-General of the International Trade Bureau and Deputy Executive Director of Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization—the limited time I have will not do justice to his distinguished service. However, I wish to point that during his tenure as Ambassador to the United States, the alliance of our two countries has grown stronger and deeper.

For instance, in 2007, the United States and South Korea signed a Free Trade Agreement that will result in significant, measurable benefits to businesses, workers, and consumers in both of our countries.

Last November, Korea successfully joined the Visa Waiver Program, which makes travel between Korea and the United States much easier for tourists, business leaders, family members, students, and others.

Additionally, by an act of Congress, Korea's Foreign Military Sales status was elevated to the equivalent of NATO+3. This change in status will have a positive impact both in terms of military readiness and enhanced interoperability of our two countries' armed forces.

Throughout Ambassador Lee's time in Washington, South Korea and the United States have remained steadfast in efforts to solve the North Korean nuclear problem and to ensure continued peace, stability, and prosperity in the Northeast Asia region. Ambassador Lee also skillfully managed often vexing and sensitive historical issues ranging from "Comfort Women" to the Dokdo Islands.

Also during Ambassador Lee's tenure, the Congress passed resolutions that included celebrating the U.S.-Korea alliance, welcoming President Myung-Bak Lee to Washington in April 2007 and calling for justice on the "Comfort Women" issue. All these important accomplishments underscore Ambassador Lee's thoughtful diplomacy and willingness to engage Members of Congress, no matter how challenging the issue at hand.

Ambassador Lee did not limit his work to our nation's capital. He often traveled throughout the United States and, on many occasions, spoke to groups of American veterans of the Korean War, offering the gratitude of his people and thanking them personally for their service and sacrifice.

The strong friendship between the United States and the Republic of Korea has been immeasurably enhanced by the professionalism, cordiality, intelligence and friendship of Ambassador Lee.

Madam Speaker, while Ambassador Lee goes on to new responsibilities and new experiences, I ask that my colleagues join with me to offer our thanks and congratulations as we bid the Ambassador a fond farewell. We wish him the best in all his future endeavors.

EARMARK DECLARATION

**HON. JO ANN EMERSON**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 24, 2009*