

million? I think most of us would like to build stadiums today for \$31 million.

Mr. Speaker, this is just a simple tribute to all those hardworking souls that made the Astros games so much fun and made the Astrodome the Eighth Wonder of the World where so many people enjoyed the opportunity to be there, not only for baseball but so many other activities and conventions and meetings. We are just grateful for the facility, and I guess what you would say is, it is off into the sunset.

But do not worry, the Astrodome will be there for others to enjoy for many years to go as we move downtown to the new Astros stadium called Enron Field located in my district, the 18th Congressional District. Hats off to the Astros, congratulations, and I will see you in the World Series.

#### TRIBUTE TO FIRST RESPONDERS, THE NATION'S FIREFIGHTERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, back in 1992, Congress passed legislation to allow and establish a national memorial for fallen firefighters. Yesterday up in Emmitsburg, Maryland, we had such a ceremony. This past year, 95 firefighters in the United States lost their lives in the line of duty. I think this Congress, this Nation, owes these individuals, the Americans that have fallen in the line of duty before them and certainly every first responder in this country, a debt of gratitude, a vote of thanks. Protecting public safety and public property is a brave calling. We certainly should as a Congress thank those individuals for the great job they did. Yesterday up in Emmitsburg it was a day of remembrance but it was also a day of celebration, because these individuals contributed so much in the spirit of honor and duty. I am a strong believer that everyone should be a supporter of their community, should try in some way to make their individual communities a little bit better by contributing, by being in public service, by being on the fund-raising committee, contributing an effort to help others when they need help.

It seems to me that cynicism has just spread too far across this country and there are too many that now consider duty and honor to be just words, relics of the past. But these men and women, our first responders, our police, and firemen especially in yesterday's dedication, they believed in duty, they believed in commitment, they believed in community. And certainly these qualities in first responders across the Nation deserve more support from this Congress.

Now, we call them first responders because, and I will give a couple of ex-

amples. When we turned on our television last spring to the terrifying situation at Columbine High School, who did we see on that television set? It was the first responders that got there first. The firefighters were there first. Whether it is wildfires or earthquakes or tornadoes or fires of unimaginable danger and stress, or when it is a beloved kitten going up a tree or when you need help for a fund-raising in the community, it is these firefighters that are there, they are willing to make the difference, they are willing to give their time and the effort.

We have got 32,000 fire departments in the United States. We have got 103 million first responders. Eighty percent of those first responders are volunteers, volunteers that go and risk their lives to protect lives and safety and support their community. I think they embody the beliefs of the founders of our country who were deeply committed to the idea that the individual had an obligation to the community, that our country needed its domestic defenders, our firefighters, our first responders, every bit as much as it needed a national defense.

Our thanks certainly should go out not only to these firefighters but their loved ones who experienced the tremendous effort, the sacrifice that these firefighters have made for their communities. Stories where firefighters made the difference are in almost every home and every community. They are certainly in my home where the firefighters came to my farm and saved not only property but the lives of a lot of my cattle on that farm. As far as I am concerned, they are the champions we can never fully thank, and speeches like this speech tonight or speeches up in Emmitsburg never are going to be adequate enough to thank those individuals that made that kind of sacrifice.

If there is any lesson that we can take, Mr. Speaker, as Americans from those in our communities that contribute so much, to make sure that we also make an effort to their memory to try to do our duty in helping others, in helping our community, in trying to do something to make our communities better and help the lives of the people that we know a little better, that is what we should do.

#### NORTH CAROLINA RECOVERS FROM HURRICANE FLOYD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Among all the death, destruction and despair that has been visited upon the people of North Carolina as a result of Hurricane Floyd, there are many bright spots. This evening, I would like to acknowledge some of those who have given of

themselves and their resources to this vital cause.

There are many deserving people who have helped North Carolina in the aftermath of Hurricane Floyd. I want to thank President Clinton for adding \$20.3 million in low-income energy assistance funds to his original extended relief package of \$528 million. Thank you, Mr. President. I wish to thank my colleagues, Representatives from the neighboring States, who have banded together to support the victims of this disaster. A special thank you to the director of FEMA, Mr. Witt; and to our governor, Mr. James Hunt, of North Carolina and their staffs for working around the clock to rescue and relieve North Carolina residents.

Some 52,000 citizens have called FEMA now seeking assistance, and Governor Hunt has had to deal with many more. Thank you, Mr. Witt and Governor Hunt, for your dedication to those in need.

I wish to take a minute to thank the Red Cross and the Salvation Army for their special help. The Red Cross opened many shelters. The Salvation Army provided mobile kitchens. And we appreciate the efforts of FEMA to provide meals ready to eat, ice, blankets, water and emergency generators. We also appreciate the hundreds of individuals in local communities, neighbors and citizens who have helped and are helping out continuously. And we appreciate the outpouring of support and resources from across the Nation. Truckloads from Baltimore, busloads from Washington, D.C.; students from North Carolina colleges, churches from far and wide, citizens of every hue, every stripe, every background, all Americans, helping out.

I know of heroic rescue efforts of people, farm animals and pets conducted by neighbors, local fire departments as the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) just mentioned, state police officers and their staffs. I wish to commend them all for their dedicated service.

A ray of sunshine was seen in North Carolina today. Today, October 4, 1999, schools reopened for thousands of North Carolina students. This is a big step forward in the long, painful attempt to return to normalcy after Hurricane Floyd. Tarboro High School in devastated Tarboro opened school today and about 60 percent of the students looked forward to attending school. I am grateful to all who have made the small routine tasks like attending school become a reality after so many days of fear and flooding. I am very grateful for those North Carolina children of our great Nation who strived hard to reestablish their daily routines and attend school today, perhaps under continuing family hardships.

I am very thankful for the county school teachers, principals, and maintenance workers that made reopening