

at such a rate as to render current infrastructure resources obsolete in dealing with the volume of commercial traffic comfortably, economically and efficiently. Between 1990 and 1995, the border town of San Luis, Arizona witnessed a population increase of more than ninety percent, from 4,212 to 8,026. The combined population of San Luis and its sister city in San Luis, Sonora, Mexico is 350,000.

Since 1924, San Luis has served as a port of entry between the U.S. and Mexico. In 1998, the port experienced average daily crossings of 360 commercial vehicles, 7,500 private vehicles, and 5,865 pedestrian crossings. The average delay experienced by a commercial vehicle is nearly 2 hours. Delays for private vehicles can be of similar length depending on the time of day. Current port facilities are unable to expedite the current volume of traffic, and the increasing volume will only make a bad situation worse, unless efforts are made to reroute commercial traffic.

Today I am introducing legislation that authorizes the Bureau of Reclamation to transfer lands to the Greater Yuma Port Authority as a first in a series of steps toward building a new port of entry to clear commercial traffic through San Luis, Arizona.

This legislative measure has the support of the parties that make up the Grater Yuma Port Authority such as Yuma County, the cities of San Luis and Somerton, and the Cocopah Indian Tribe. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation.

TRIBUTE TO DR. PEDRO JOSÉ
GREER, JR.

HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 5, 1999

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a true humanitarian, an outstanding Cuban-American physician, a genuine hero, Dr. Pedro José Greer Jr., whose love for mankind, especially for the poor and homeless, is an admirable example for contemporary American society.

My uncle and aunt, Alfredo and Isabel Caballero, recently sent me a book authored by Dr. Greer with the cooperation of another admirable Cuban-American: Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Liz Balmaseda. The book is titled, "Waking Up In America", and I highly recommend it to you, Mr. Speaker, and to all my colleagues.

Dr. Greer courageously denounces how society neglects millions of Americans who lack adequate health care. Dr. Greer is the medical director and one of the founders in South Florida of the Camilus Health Concern, a free clinic for the poor, and the San Juan Bosco Clinic for the poor. He has won a MacArthur Fellowship "Genius Grant" and was recognized by Time Magazine as one of Fifty Top Young Leaders Under 40 in 1994. Dr. Greer has also been honored by two U.S. Presidents.

Dr. Pedro José Greer Jr. was brought up in a family with a tradition of love and service for our fellow man, formed by his father Dr. Pedro Greer, a prestigious Cuban gastroenterologist, and his mother, Mrs. Maria Teresa Medina

Greer. Dr. Greer's great-grandfather fought for Cuba's freedom in 1898.

I would like to express my gratitude and congratulations to Dr. Pedro José Greer Jr. for his love and work for America and also extend this congratulatory message to his proud parents, his wife Janus Munley Greer, his children Alana and Joey and his sister and brother in law, Sally and Brian Belt.

HONORING SCHOOL FOODSERVICE
DIRECTOR HELEN RANKIN

HON. JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 5, 1999

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call my colleagues' attention to National School Lunch Week which we will celebrate next week. Having grown up in the restaurant business, I feel a special camaraderie with school food service professionals. Every day, professional across the country ensure that our students have at least one hot, nutritious meal to help them grow and learn.

Maine is blessed with many extraordinary school food service professionals. But one in particular stands out—Helen Rankin, foodservice director for Maine School Administrative District 55, based in Hiram, Maine. Hiram is not what anybody would describe as a metropolitan area. It is a small, rural area much like most of Maine.

Helen has brought a degree of professionalism to her operation that belies the small size of the school system. Her commitment to quality and top performance by herself and her staff has made her a leader in Maine and across the nation.

Earlier this year, Helen was featured in the national publication School Foodservice & Nutrition. The article just scratches the surface of Helen's activities on behalf of her clients—school children in the Hiram area and beyond. She recognizes that school food services are a crucial building block in a child's education. We all know that hungry children cannot learn and that their bodies cannot grow and develop as they should.

Helen Rankin is a dynamic, dedicated professional. Maine students have benefitted tremendously from her leadership. I am proud to have the opportunity today to pay tribute to her, and to all of Maine's school foodservice professionals. I hope that next week, during National School Lunch Week, all of my colleagues will take the opportunity to recognize these hardworking individuals.

Mr. Speaker, I insert the School Foodservice & Nutrition article about Helen Rankin to be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD at this point.

HELEN RANKIN

BRINGING BIG-TIME PROFESSIONALISM TO A
SMALL-TOWN DISTRICT

(By Mark Ward, Sr.)

Try to find Hiram, Maine, on a road atlas and it might take you a while. But while the town may be off the main highway, it's squarely on the map of leading school foodservice operations.

"We don't have the facilities of a larger district, but we're still on the cutting edge.

And even if we don't have a lot of students, we do a lot for them," reports Helen Rankin, foodservice director for Maine School Administrative District No. 55, based in Hiram and serving five rural communities in the southwest corner of the state.

What puts Hiram on the school foodservice map is a simple maxim: "I insist on professionalism," declares Rankin of her school nutrition team. For example, though the district's six schools serve just 800 lunches a day, each member of Rankin's staff is an ASFSA member, has taken a sanitation course and is a ServSafe certified food service handler. And despite an annual budget of just \$400,000 (which includes a district appropriation of just \$11,000), the department pays the expenses for its employees to attend state association conferences.

That commitment to professionalism and continuing education starts with Rankin herself. After 40 years in school foodservice, including 30 years in her present post, she's not resting on her laurels. At the state level, she has helped to transform what was a small association into a professional organization that now boasts 700 members and conducts a statewide peer review program. And, as a former Maine School Food Service Association (MSFSA) president, Rankin enjoys respect and clout with state and local policymakers.

And though Hiram may be a small dot on the roadmap, Rankin sees no limit to her own professional horizons. She has spoken at conferences across the country, been nominated twice for ASFSA national office and served as Northeast Regional Director on the National Association's Executive Board. Throughout the 1990s, Rankin's influence has been felt on the ASFSA Public Policy and Legislative Committee and, more recently, its Political Action Committee (PAC).

"By making a commitment to get involved with my profession," Rankin reflects, "I've had opportunities that a person from a small rural town, who started out with only a 9th-grade education, might only have dreamed of."

FROM PTA TO PROFESSIONAL

Forty years ago, the notion that a school cafeteria worker could be a "school foodservice professional" was rarely encouraged—or even understood. Back then, Rankin says, she first became involved with school meals "because the PTA, which I was president of, was responsible for the hot lunch program." When the group hired a new cook who quit after just one day, it was up to Rankin to fill the gap. "We had 75 students at that school and, after volunteering at first, I ultimately got paid \$15 a week to cook the meals and clean the kitchen," she recalls.

Over time, Rankin received her own high school equivalency certificate and went on to earn a bachelor's degree. Then in her ninth year as de facto school foodservice manager, the school was incorporated into a newly formed district. In turn, that brought the hiring of a district foodservice director. Like the cook a decade earlier, the person who filled this position resigned after a brief stint, which paved the way for Rankin to assume the post.

"In those days we had no free lunch program, and I can remember kids who would bring in a jar of water and a piece of bread to eat," Rankin continues. Now, 30 years later, "We have reimbursable meals, a breakfast program, a la carte service—plus marketing and promotion, and the expectation that we have to be financially self-supporting. Times certainly have changed," she adds.

It also was 30 years ago that Rankin was introduced to ASFSFA and the concept that school foodservice could be a professional pursuit. "MSFSFA's conference were small," she recalls, "So I went to my first state meeting in Connecticut. That got me fired up and, along with some other foodservice directors from Maine, we decided to start building up our own state association and making it more active."

Professional involvements "are hard work" Rankin admits. And many times her volunteer commitments require extra hours at work because, lacking funds to hire a full central office staff, Rankin first must handle all the business affairs of the district office. "Yet you learn so much by going to meetings and participating in your profession," she remarks. "Every time I go to a conference or event, I find out what's going on in the industry and the profession. Best of all is the exchange of ideas you get, because you can talk with other professionals one-on-one."

PRESERVATION AND PROGRESS

And while Rankin is a firm believer in the need for school foodservice professionals to meet with and learn from one another, she also emphasizes the need for the profession to build relationships with government, industry—and the public.

That realization came to Rankin—and many other school foodservice operators—in a big way, five years ago, when a push was made in Congress to eliminate the National School Lunch Program. As a result, child nutrition advocates from both large urban districts and small rural schools joined with politicians, industry partners and others to make their case for the need for school nutrition programs to remain a federal program.

Today, ending the National School Lunch Program is no longer an issue. The visibility and respect that the school food-service profession earned on Capitol Hill during the debate remains in force.

To preserve these gains and secure more victories, Rankin reports that the goal of the ASFSFA PAC is to "ensure that supporters of child nutrition are re-elected to public office."

Like school foodservice directors across the country, Rankin also has focused attention on building bridges at the state level. Back home in Maine, she has helped the profession establish a presence in the state legislature, governor's mansion and in city and county councils statewide. Currently, school food-service directors in Maine are pressing for increased support of nutrition education programs.

In a career that already has spanned 40 years, Rankin has set a personal goal she hopes to achieve before retirement. "School foodservice should be respected enough to be recognized as an integral part of the education process, and therefore included in school planning," she asserts. "For example, determining how much time is allotted for lunch should have the same weight as planning for class periods, rather than just giving lunch whatever time is left over."

Because Rankin is employed in a small district, she enjoys—in a way not available to directors in many large districts—personal and daily contact with school officials. Therefore, she's enthused about the prospects of realizing her goals and seeing her district become a national model for integrating nutrition and education planning.

"Whether your district is large or small, the basic challenges are the same," Rankin concludes. "For example, I may not have the same computer system that a large district

has. But that's okay, because the real issue is that, with kids, you always need the human touch. Whatever your district's size, whether it's large or small, city or country, the most important thing we serve our students is a smile."

NATIONAL AMUSEMENT PARK RIDE SAFETY ACT OF 1999

HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 6, 1999

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, today I am joined by ten of my colleagues in introducing "The National Amusement Park Ride Safety Act of 1999." They include Representatives MILLER (CA), HOFFEL (PA), WEXLER (FL), KUCINICH (OH), LIPINSKI (IL), MALONEY (NY), WEINER (NY), DELAURO (NY), NEAL (MA) and WAXMAN (CA). This bill will restore the ability of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to investigate serious accidents in amusement parks that offer rides, such as roller coasters, which are permanently fixed to the site. While the CPSC has the authority to investigate accidents that occur on rides that move from site to site, rides that are permanently fixed in theme parks are off limits. This bill would correct this anomaly by closing the "roller coaster loophole."

Roller coasters are, in general, quite safe. But in the course of just 6 days at the end of August, an unusual number of tragedies on amusement park rides highlighted the fact that when something goes wrong on these rides, the consequences can be catastrophic. Today's rides are huge metal machines capable of hurling the human body through space at forces that exceed the Space Shuttle and at speeds that exceed 100 miles per hour. They are complex industrial-size mechanisms whose design, maintenance and operation can push the limits of physical tolerance even for patrons in peak condition, let alone members of the broad spectrum of the public who are invited to ride each day.

The fatalities at the end of August, which U.S. News & World Report termed "one of the most calamitous weeks in the history of America's amusement parks," included:

August 22—a 12-year-old boy fell to his death after slipping through a harness on the Drop Zone ride at Paramount's Great America Theme Park in Santa Clara, California;

August 23—a 20-year-old man died on the Shockwave roller coaster at Paramout King's Dominion theme park near Richmond, Virginia;

August 28—a 39-year-old woman and her 8-year-old daughter were killed when their car slid backward down a 30-foot ascent and crashed into another car, injuring two others on the Wild Wonder roller coaster at Gillian's Wonderland Pier in Ocean City, New Jersey.

The Consumer Product Safety Act charges the CPSC with the responsibility to protect the public against unreasonable risks of injuries and deaths associated with consumer products. However, rides in "fixed locations" such as theme parks are currently entirely exempt from safety regulation by the CPSC. State oversight is good in some places, bad in others, and in some states, the state has also ex-

empted "fixed locations" so that there is no federal or state regulatory body overseeing ride safety. The number of serious injuries on "fixed location" rides has risen dramatically from 1994 through 1998.

Why do we bar the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) from investigating accidents on roller coasters and from sharing that information with the rest of the country?

It makes no sense.

When a child is killed or injured on an amusement park ride, should the decision to investigate depend on whether the amusement park ride is "fixed" versus "mobile"?

Emergency-room injuries more than doubled in the last five years, yet the CPSC is prohibited from investigating any—not one—of those accidents, even when it involves a ride that may be in heavy use by mobile carnivals or fairs.

According to the CPSC Chair, Ann Brown, "The current regulatory structure as it applies to fixed-site amusement park rides is not sufficient to protect against unreasonable risks of injuries or deaths caused by these rides."

She is right.

The accident statistics highlight the folly of granting an exemption from federal safety regulation to amusement park rides. Injuries are rising rapidly on the one category of amusement park rides that the CPSC is barred from overseeing. The manufacturer or owner of every other consumer product in America is required by law to inform the CPSC whenever it becomes aware that the product may pose a substantial risk of harm—but not the owners or operators of "fixed-site" rides in amusement parks.

Some in the industry argue that this legislation is unnecessary because the states or the industry itself can provide sufficient protection. This argument fails on two counts.

First, many states have simply failed to step in where the federal safety agency has been excluded. The CPSC reports that there is still no state-level inspection program in Alabama, Arizona, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Texas, Utah and Vermont. In addition, Florida exempts the big theme parks from state inspection, Virginia relies on private inspections, and New York exempts New York City (which includes Coney Island.) California had no state program until last month.

Second, states are not equipped and not inclined to act as a national clearinghouse of safety problems associated with particular rides or with operator or patron errors. That is a federal function. Yet the federal agency charged with the protection of the public against unreasonable risk of injury or death is currently, by law, forbidden from carrying out this important task.

I urge my colleagues to support this measured effort to close the loopholes and to ensure patrons of amusement parks that the level of protection afforded by law will no longer hinge on the question of whether the ride itself is "mobile" or "fixed."