EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN HONOR OF RICHARD KWASNESKI, MAYOR OF LEMONT, IL

HON. JUDY BIGGERT OF ILLINOIS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 4, 2001

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Richard Kwanseski, who in just a few weeks will be retiring as Mayor of Lemont, Illinois, which is located in my congressional district.

Our local governments could not work if it were not for people like Rick—they serve their hometowns for no other reason than because they love where they live.

Rick Kwanseski surely loves Lemont. For the past 16 years, Rick has served the people of Lemont with dedication and honor, first as a Village Trustee for eight years and then as Mayor for the past eight.

As Mayor, Rick led the economic and physical revitalization of Lemont’s historic downtown area, created a Historic District in the downtown area to promote and preserve the rich history of Lemont, and reconstructed the town’s aging infrastructure and roadways. He also lowered the Village’s property tax rate to its lowest level in 25 years.

Rick is a tireless champion for Lemont, always working to improve the Village wherever there is a need. The residents of Lemont were lucky to have him as Mayor and I know he will be missed.

I am going to miss Rick as well. Since I came to Congress a little over two years ago, Rick has been a valuable partner on issues important to Lemont, such as the southern extension of I-355 and extra train service on the Heritage Corridor rail line that serves Lemont.

Mr. Speaker, let me close by saying that we need more excellent individuals like Rick Kwanseski to go into public service. His selfless hard work and advocacy for Lemont are a model for all of us.

And even though he will no longer serve as Mayor of Lemont, I know that he will continue to have a strong presence in the community, lending a hand whenever and wherever it is needed.

FEBRUARY 22 FOREST ROUNDTABLE IN MISSOULA

HON. DENNIS REHBERG OF MONTANA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 4, 2001

Mr. REHBERG. Mr. Speaker, on February 22 I sponsored a roundtable discussion in Missoula, Montana on forest health issues. This discussion included presentations from a wide array of interests.

Representing the conservation community were Tom France of the Montana Wildlife Federation, Cesar Hernandez of the Montana Wildlife Federation, and Steve Morgan of the Montana Conservation Voters. Forest products industry witnesses were Kim Lies of the Pulp and Paperworkers Resource Council, Jim Hurst of Owens and Hurst Lumber, Sherm Anderson of the Montana Logging Association and Roger Johnson of Pyramid Mountain Lumber Company. The governor was represented by Commissioners Barbara Evans of Missoula County, Alan Thompson of Ravalli County, Dave Williams of Flathead County and Rita Windham of Lincoln County. Providing creative ideas practiced on non-federal lands were Garry Orr of the Salish-Kootenai Tribes and Tom Schultz with the Montana Department of State Lands. Finally, the academic and community representatives were represented by Drs. Chuck Keegan and Carl Fiedler of the University of Montana and U.S. Forest Service Fire Ecologist Steve Amo.

This roundtable, and one scheduled for April 18 in Hamilton, will provide me with firsthand accounts of what is working and not working regarding management of Montana’s forests. As a member of both the House Committees on Agriculture and Resources, that have jurisdiction over management and the Environment, this is a chance for me to learn more about the issues facing our state and to help develop the best possible solutions from a variety of interests.

I encourage my colleagues to read the following article by Sherry Devlin on the Missoulian roundtable that appeared in the Feb. 23 Missoulian. I also highly recommend reading the testimony of Kim Lies who is a papermaker for Smurfit-Stone Container in Frenchtown, Montana and a member of Hellgate Local 8-0885 PACE International Union.

[From the Missoulian (MT), Feb. 23, 2001]

REHBERG GETS EARFUL ON FORESTS

INDUSTRY OFFICIALS SAY CONTROL SHOULD STAY WITH LOCALS

(Sherry Devlin)

The rest of the country should just “but out” and let Montanans manage the national forests in their back yards, a Eureka sawmill owner told U.S. Rep. Denny Rehberg’s forest-management roundtable Thursday.

“I’m not going to tell the people of New York City how to manage Central Park,” said Jim Hurst, owner of Owens and Hurst Lumber Co. “So why should they be telling us how to manage the Kootenai National Forest? I say they should butt out.”

Montanans, Hurst said, can work their way through even the thorniest forest-management issues. It’s the national dictates—of presidents, congressmen and bureaucrats—that make people dig in their heels.

So went the conversation during a four-hour, four-panel series of roundtable discussions at the University of Montana, called by Rehberg—he said—to learn more about forest-management issues and to look for common ground. “Is there anything that we can all agree on?” he asked.

“Yes,” said paper maker Kim Lies. “I share everyone’s concern for the health, conservation and beauty of this great state. I most certainly do not want to destroy the environment.”

“Yes,” said environmental lawyer Tom France. “If it’s not just a rush to get timber off the hill, but a rush to do right by the land.”

“Good,” said Rehberg, the Republican elected in November to Montana’s single seat in the House of Representatives. “People have this preconceived notion that I have a preconceived notion about forest management. And I don’t. I am serious about the consensus process.”

Collaboration can work; it can yield timber cutting and endangered-species recovery,
said France, an attorney for the National Wildlife Federation in Missoula.

Loggers and environmentalists have been able to look at specific pieces of land and agree upon “appropriate timber harvest” that “lays lightly on the land,” he said. “It works best when we are discussing specific tracts of land in our own, local area.”

“Let’s start talking about salvage logging in burned areas and restoration projects in the urban-wildland interface,” said Anne Dahl of the Swan Ecosystem Center. “We are very capable of making good decisions as a community.

“We need to start over and practice sustainable forestry on the millions and millions of acres of forest land that we already roaded and developed,” said Steve Thompson, a Whitefish consultant, writer and environmental activist.

Don’t get distracted, Thompson advised, by focusing your energy on a repeal of President Clinton’s roadless initiative—the last administration’s controversial ban on road building and logging on 58 million acres of undeveloped national forest land.

“Many of the forest issues that we face are very polarized, very difficult,” France said. “They are not easily resolved by even powerful congressmen back East. We in Montana, with 155 national forests, encompassing 200 million acres of land, has in the past been guided by the concept of multiple use for sustained yield—a policy of wise conservation. These uses have always included managed forested recreation, of all sorts, including skiing, fishing, hunting, camping, snowmobiling and others. These forests have also at the same time been managed for wildlife and the environment.

I as well as my colleagues and others involved in natural resource based industries are deeply concerned with the management of our public lands. To manage our National Forests and public lands from an office back East is unacceptable. We can do that, and we must do that.”

Hurt told Rehberg that federal land management policies have bankrupted his community and broken its spirit. “Eureka, Montana, is a Rambo town. We are unemployed, we are hurting,” said Liles, who works at Smurfit-Stone Container Corp.’s Frenchtown linerboard plant. “The national folks don’t have to experience the economic downturn of our policies cause. They don’t know us or our geography. We have very good people right here in Missoula, Montana, in the Forest Service. We need to allow them to do their jobs.”

Representative Rehberg, ladies and gentlemen. I am happy to be here with you today, to have an opportunity to express my concern for this very important workforce here in this room. I share everyone’s concern for the health and conservation of our natural resources, the environment and the beauty of our state. I hope that just because I am employed in the timber industry, people don’t assume I want to destroy the environment, or degrade our environmental controls. I most certainly do not and neither do those I work with and for. We all enjoy this great state and most of us are outdoorsmen, Hunters, campers, mountain bikers, snowmobilers and fishermen. We have a vested interest in being good stewards of the land as much as anyone else.

Today, America has 630 wilderness areas encompassing 102 million acres of land under federal control. The National Forest System with 155 national forests, encompassing 200 million acres of land, has in the past been guided by the concept of multiple use for sustained yield—a policy of wise conservation. These uses have always included managed forested recreation, of all sorts, including skiing, fishing, hunting, camping, snowmobiling and others. These forests have also at the same time been managed for wildlife and the environment.

I as well as my colleagues and others involved in natural resource based industries are deeply concerned with the management of our public lands. To manage our National Forests and public lands from an office back east, by the stroke of a pen is unacceptable. These people do not have to live with outcomes of their actions. We can be better served by people here locally and on the State level. They are in touch with the needs of the area and have the know how, ability and vested interest in being good stewards of the land as well.

Whether we want to admit it or not this is about jobs, it’s about economies, families and communities. Due to many things such as plant shutdowns, and economically devastated families and communities are we going to have to endure before we come to the realization that there is no budget, that you have to produce a value added product somewhere in the equation. You cannot sustain an economy with service-based jobs alone. In fact, the pendulum has swung far in one direction, believe me, I do not want to see it go all the way in the other direction. We need to stop it (the pendulum), and set it in the middle. We can do that, and we must do that.

FORTY-THREE BRAVE AMERICAN SOLDIERS

HON. JIM TURNER OF TEXAS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, April 4, 2001

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, history almost forgot forty-three American soldiers who were involved in one of the hottest firefights of the Cold War. The morning after Thanksgiving in 1984, four soldiers monitoring the demilitarized zone on the North Korean border saw their North Korean counterparts race across the border towards them, in hot pursuit after a fleeing Soviet defector. What followed for almost an hour was a gunfight between the forty-three American soldiers, their South Korean allies, and dozens of attacking North Koreans. In the exchange of fire, an American soldier was injured, one South Korean was killed, and at least two North Koreans were killed and another two wounded.

The forty-three American soldiers faced the danger of combat, protecting our liberty and our commitment to democracy. But for years, they were never recognized with the Combat Infantryman’s Badge—a mark of honor and distinction reserved for those American soldiers who faced enemy fire and survived.

Finally, after seventeen years, these brave men will receive the recognition they deserve. The reasons for the delay—bureaucratic politics and inconsistent regulations—might just as well be forgotten by history. But we must never let these men, their courage, their sacrifice, and their honor be lost in the status of a footnote in the history books.

Our nation has always had its heroes. From the great revolutionaries like Patrick Henry and George Washington to the pioneers like...