

the future at the challenges our Nation and world will face. Nate knew that he would never face those challenges, but that his great grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren would.

Nate Wexler leaves behind a large family and friends of all ages and from all walks of life. He will be missed tremendously, but he lives on in all of us who were fortunate enough to know and to learn from him.●

HONORING CALIFORNIA'S LOST FIREFIGHTERS

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the lives of Shawn Blazer, Scott Charlson, Edrik Gomez, Matthew Hammer, Dan Packer, Andrew Jackson Palmer, Jim Ramage, Steven Renno, Bryan Rich, Roark Schwanenberg, and David Steele. These brave men lost their lives while working to protect Californians from devastating forest fires.

On August 5, 2008, seven firefighters and two helicopter pilots were tragically killed in a helicopter accident while bravely fighting the Iron Complex Fire in Trinity County. I would like to say a few words about each of these men.

Shawn Blazer of Medford, OR, had been working as a firefighter for 1 year and told his family and friends that he had "discovered his calling." Shawn was dedicated to his family and had been caring for his mother when he died. He had a passion for photography, computer games and playing sports. He is remembered for his dedication and love for his friends and family.

Scott Charlson of Phoenix, OR, was a student at Southern Oregon University and worked as a firefighter during the summer to put himself through college. He had a passion for journalism, especially covering sporting events. His classmates recalled his ethics, excellence in reporting and kind and caring nature.

Edrik Gomez of Ashland, OR, was a student at Southern Oregon University, double majoring in communications and political science and was in his first year as a firefighter. Gomez was known as a leader with great compassion and for his lighthearted spirit, interest in politics and close bond with his family and friends.

Matthew Hammer of Grants Pass, OR, was a recent graduate from Corban College with a degree in business. He married his college sweetheart this summer and had planned on making 2008 his last fire season as a firefighter. He is remembered as an athletic, friendly, fun-loving person who excelled under pressure.

Jim Ramage of Redding, CA, was a helicopter pilot who served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam war and had a distinguished career with the U.S. Forest Service and CAL Fire. Friends and family remember Jim's passion for

aviation and protecting public safety. He is remembered for the bonds he created with his friends and the great love he had for his family.

Steven "Caleb" Renno of Cave Junction, OR, was a track and field coach for his alma mater, Illinois Valley High School, where he excelled in both track and cross country. After high school he attended Southern Oregon University and worked as a firefighter during summers. He will be remembered for his talent as a runner and as an avid traveler.

Bryan Rich of Central Point, OR, was a talented framing carpenter who recently began a career in firefighting. He loved spending time outdoors, playing sports and is remembered for his dedication to his family.

Roark Schwanenberg of Lostine, OR, was a U.S. Army trained helicopter pilot, who many of his colleagues consider one of the best helicopter pilots, with whom they have worked. He is remembered for his humor, great skill as a pilot, and love for his family and friends.

David Steele of Bend, OR, was a student at Central Oregon Community College and worked as a firefighter during the summer to pay for his education. He planned on becoming a career firefighter after graduating from both Fire Fighting and Emergency Medical Technician schools. Friends and family remember his strong work ethic, love of his family and big heart.

We also mourn the loss of two other brave firefighters from the State of Washington who lost their lives battling California wildfires this summer.

Dan Packer of Sumner, WA, was the Chief of the East Piece Fire Department and past president of the Washington State Fire Chiefs. He had a passion for public safety and was known for his ability to relate to anyone. Chief Packer is remembered for his strong leadership abilities and dedication to his family. Chief Packer lost his life while battling the Panther Fire in Siskiyou County on July 26, 2008.

Andrew Jackson Palmer of Port Townsend, WA, was a 2008 graduate of Port Townsend High School where he was a standout athlete on the football team. Andy enjoyed playing a variety of sports and spending time with his friends and family. Andy's loved ones recall his kind heart, honesty and integrity. Andy tragically died while fighting the Iron Complex Fire in Trinity County on July 25, 2008.

These brave firefighters and pilots, like all those who fight fires across California, put their lives on the line to protect our communities. My heart goes out to their families and loved ones and my thoughts and prayers are with them. We are forever indebted to them for their courage, service and sacrifice.●

TRIBUTE TO JO PRICE CRAVEN

● Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I would like to recognize Ms. Jo Price Craven, principal of Piner Elementary School in Morning City, KY. Ms. Jo Price Craven was recently honored by the National Association of Elementary School Principals as one of the recipients of the 2008 National Distinguished Principals Award.

The National Distinguished Principals Program was established in 1984 as an annual event to honor exemplary elementary school principals who set the pace, character, and quality of the education children receive during their early school years. One principal is chosen from each of the 50 States and the District of Columbia, and this year Ms. Jo Price Craven has been selected as a National Distinguished Principal from the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Throughout her time at Piner Elementary School, Principal Jo Price Craven has displayed herself to be an example of excellence in primary education. Her educational philosophy fosters a school environment that is considerate and challenging to allow teachers at Piner Elementary to mobilize and enhance student performance.

Kentuckians are extremely proud of Ms. Jo Price Craven. I am honored to pay tribute to her, and I encourage my colleagues to join me in wishing Principal Craven continued success as she continues her exceptional work in education.●

RECOGNIZING MS. KELSEY LANDT

● Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, today I recognize Ms. Kelsey Landt of Paducah, KY, who is a premed senior at the University of Kentucky at 13 years old. Before her teenage years Kelsey participated in spinal cord injury research at the University of Kentucky, and while at the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, she utilized transcranial magnetic stimulation to understand reward processing. At the age of 10, she presented her work at the 2005 Community College Conference for Student Research in Madisonville, KY, and this year, she participated in a summer internship program at the National Institutes of Health in Maryland. At an age when many children look to hangout at a local mall, Kelsey has already built a resume that mirrors those students who were born more than a decade before her.

In addition to her academic activities, Kelsey is involved in community life. She is presently the youngest account holder at the Community Foundation of West Kentucky where she raises money for medical and research based charitable organizations. She is a regular at the local Salvation Army and makes time to volunteer at a local children's hospital in Lexington, KY.

After earning a bachelor's degree in biology at the University of Kentucky

next spring, Kelsey will begin her postbaccalaureate position at the National Institutes of Health and then hopes to attend medical school. Like most Kentuckians, I look forward to seeing all that she will accomplish as she works toward her goal of becoming a medical scientist.●

CONGRATULATING WALKER INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

● Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Walker Intermediate School on being named a President's Challenge State Champion by the President's Council on Physical Fitness, PCPFS, for 2007–2008. Their accomplishment is an example for all schools across the Commonwealth and our Nation.

Each year the PCPFS State Champion award is presented in all 50 states to 3 schools with the highest number of students scoring at or above the 85th percentile on the President's Challenge Physical Fitness Test. The test measures four components of physical fitness: a 1-mile run-walk for heart and lung endurance; curl ups for abdominal strength and endurance; a "sit and reach" stretch for muscular flexibility; pullups for upper body strength and endurance; and a shuttle run for agility. The inclusion of Walker Intermediate School in this group is a credit to the dedication of its students, staff, and administration.

Walker Intermediate School is a role model to other institutions through its dedication to helping students gain physical fitness skills and to understanding the health benefits of regular physical activity. In a time in which many young people are faced with weight related problems, Walker Intermediate has proven to be a leader by encouraging students and adults to engage in physical activity.

Walker Intermediate School is an inspiration to the citizens of Kentucky and to student and community leaders everywhere. I look forward to seeing all they will accomplish in the future.●

CONGRATULATING WEST KNOX ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

● Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate West Knox Elementary School on being named a President's Challenge State Champion by the President's Council on Physical Fitness, PCPFS, for 2007–2008. Their accomplishment is an example for all schools across the Commonwealth and our Nation.

Each year the PCPFS State Champion award is presented in all 50 States to 3 schools with the highest number of students scoring at or above the 85th percentile on the President's Challenge Physical Fitness Test. The test meas-

ures four components of physical fitness: a 1-mile run-walk for heart and lung endurance; curl ups for abdominal strength and endurance; a "sit and reach" stretch for muscular flexibility; pullups for upper body strength and endurance; and a shuttle run for agility. The inclusion of West Knox Elementary School in this group is a credit to the dedication of its students, staff, and administration.

West Knox Elementary School is a role model to other institutions through its dedication to helping students gain physical fitness skills and to understanding the health benefits of regular physical activity. In a time in which many young people are faced with weight related problems, West Knox Elementary has proven to be a leader by encouraging students and adults to engage in physical activity.

West Knox Elementary School is an inspiration to the citizens of Kentucky and to student and community leaders everywhere. I look forward to seeing all they will accomplish in the future.●

BOISE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TOWER

● Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, as an Idahoan, I have many reasons to be proud of the accomplishments of fellow Idahoans, and today, I have yet another: in early September, the Federal Aviation Administration notified the Boise Air Traffic Control Tower—BOI ATCT—that it had been selected as National Facility of the Year for fiscal year 2007. In a category that included 112 other facilities nationwide, the BOI ATCT scored higher than the others on safety metrics, employee focus, innovation and customer service. I congratulate Gordon Stewart, BOI ATCT manager and his staff for their teamwork, positive, winning attitudes and overall excellence. As Gordon noted recently, he and his team are "ever cognizant of the public trust bestowed upon our profession, and with that knowledge we constantly strive to move the bar of excellence higher. . . . The greatest tool at our disposal is communication." This award comes on the heels of a regional award that the BOI ATCT team won for fiscal year 2006.

I wish BOI ATCT continued success in its service and its highly effective partnerships with the Boise Airport, Idaho Air and Army National Guard, National Interagency Fire Center, passenger and cargo airlines and corporate and general aviation. It is good to know that an airport that I frequently use abides by such high standards of safety and service.●

ATLANTIC COMMUNITY EDUCATION

● Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, in Iowa and across the United States, a new school year has begun. As you know,

Iowa public schools have an excellent reputation nationwide, and Iowa students' test scores are among the highest in the Nation.

I would like to take just a few minutes today to salute the dedicated teachers, administrators, and school board members in the Atlantic Community School District, and to report on their participation in a unique Federal partnership to repair and modernize school facilities.

This fall marks the 10th year of the Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program. That is its formal name, but it is better known among educators in Iowa as the program of Harkin grants for Iowa public schools. Since 1998, I have been fortunate to secure a total of \$121 million for the State government in Iowa, which selects worthy school districts to receive these grants for a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools or renovating existing facilities. In many cases, this Federal funding is used to leverage public and/or private local funding, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect in a local school district.

The Atlantic Community School District received two Harkin fire safety grants totaling \$180,960 which it used for improvements to the fire safety systems at the elementary and middle schools and to address deficiencies on the fire safety report. The Federal grants have made it possible for the district to provide quality and safe schools for their students.

Excellent schools do not just pop up like mushrooms after a rain. They are the product of vision, leadership, persistence, and a tremendous amount of collaboration among local officials and concerned citizens. I salute Superintendent Wendy Prigge, former Superintendent Mark Schweer, the entire staff, administration, and governance in the Atlantic Community School District. In particular, I would like to recognize the leadership of the board of education—President Phil Hascall, Vice President Jody Lorence, Kristy Pellett, Dennis Davis, Jon Martens, and former members Jan Myers, Steve Jacobs, and Glen Smith. In addition, district staff Barb Nelson, now deceased, Denise Bridges, Jan Kerns, and Jerry Jensen should also be recognized for their work on the grant application and implementation.

As we mark the 10th anniversary of the Harkin school grant program in Iowa, I am obliged to point out that many thousands of school buildings and facilities across the United States are in dire need of renovation or replacement. In my State of Iowa alone, according to a recent study, some 79 percent of public schools need to be upgraded or repaired. The harsh reality is that the average age of school buildings in the United States is nearly 50 years.