

We can be heartened today that many barriers to full inclusion for blind Americans have been dismantled. But the greatest barrier still remains: the attitude of too many sighted people that those who are blind or visually impaired are incapable of holding their own in the working world. On White Cane Safety Day, let us reaffirm our national commitment to providing equal opportunity for all Americans, regardless of disability.

To honor the many achievements of blind and visually impaired citizens and to recognize the white cane's significance in advancing independence, the Congress, by joint resolution approved October 6, 1964, has designated October 15 of each year as "White Cane Safety Day."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 15, 1999, as White Cane Safety Day. I call upon the people of the United States, government officials, educators, and business leaders to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifteenth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

**Proclamation 7241 of October 15, 1999**

**National Forest Products Week, 1999**

*By the President of the United States of America*

*A Proclamation*

From our earliest days as a Nation, America's forests have played a vital role in fostering our country's economic strength and enhancing the quality of our lives. American Indians and European settlers alike found in our forests the fuel and material for shelter to sustain their families and communities. From those same forests came timber for our fleets of sailing ships and the ties for our railroads that span the continent. Whether working in lumber mills or paper mills, for furniture manufacturers or the building industry, generations of Americans have earned their livelihood from the bounty of our forests.

Forests bring more, however, to our lives than economic prosperity. They provide invaluable habitat for a variety of plants and animals, help to keep our air and water clean, and promote soil stability. They also renew our spirits by offering us a place to experience the beauty, peace, and diversity of the natural world.

As our Nation has grown and developed, so too have our demands on our forests. We can be grateful that, despite decades of exploitation, forests still comprise as much as one-third of our country's land area today. Thanks to innovative management techniques, individual and corporate commitment to recycling, and close cooperation between Federal, State, and private land owners, we are succeeding in sustaining the health and productivity of these precious natural resources. Through continued wise stewardship, we can ensure that future gen-

erations of Americans will have the same opportunities to share the beauty and bounty of our forests as we enjoy today.

To recognize the importance of our forests in ensuring the long-term welfare of our Nation, the Congress, by Public Law 86-753 (36 U.S.C. 123), has designated the week beginning on the third Sunday in October of each year as "National Forest Products Week" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 17 through October 23, 1999, as National Forest Products Week. I call upon all Americans to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fifteenth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

#### **Proclamation 7242 of October 16, 1999**

#### **National Character Counts Week, 1999**

*By the President of the United States of America*

##### *A Proclamation*

The character of our citizens has enriched every aspect of our national life and has set an example of civic responsibility for people around the world. The diligence and determination that are part of our Nation's work ethic have strengthened our economy, and the firm convictions of our spiritual leaders have helped guide our communities, fostering unity, compassion, and humility.

In this dynamic time of unparalleled opportunity and possibility, our children will encounter a variety of new challenges that will test the strength of their character and convictions. As the dawn of the new millennium fast approaches, we must work together—parents, public officials, educators, entertainers, and business and religious leaders—to impart to our youth the core values they need to be good citizens.

We know that parents play a critical role in imparting moral values to their children. But in today's complex and fast-paced society, when parents must spend longer hours at work and more families are headed by a single parent, parents have less time to spend with their children—an average decrease of 22 hours a week over the past 30 years, according to a report released this spring by my Council of Economic Advisers. We must seek innovative ways to address this problem and to promote stronger families, including greater flexibility in paid work hours, more affordable child care, and increased support for low-income families.

My Administration is committed to providing families with the tools they need to fulfill their responsibilities at home and at work. Our agenda includes tripling our investment in after-school programs through the 21st Century Community Learning Center program and a