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time in office, he helped open new markets for trade, promoted renewable fuels and conservation, and provided timely assistance to our farmers and ranchers devastated by natural disasters. Mike leaves a legacy of integrity and dedication. And Laura and I wish Mike and his wife, Stephanie, all the best on their return to Nebraska.

I also thank my friend Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Chuck Conner for serving as Acting Secretary during this time of transition. Chuck grew up on a family farm in Indiana. He has a deep knowledge of agricultural issues. He's done an outstanding job. Appreciate the fact that you will remain as Acting Secretary until the Senate confirms Ed as Mike Johanns's permanent replacement. And thank you for joining us today.

Following Mike is not going to be easy, but Ed Schafer is up to the challenge. With Ed's leadership, we will work with Congress to pass a farm bill that provides farmers with a safety net, protects our lands and the environment, and spends Federal tax dollars wisely. Ed will also join other members of my administration to continue leveling the playing field for America's farm products by concluding the Doha round of trade negotiations. And he and I will continue to work hard to open up new markets for American beef.

As Ed takes on these new challenges, he will rely on the support of his caring family. Ed is blessed with a wonderful wife, Nancy, who came from North Dakota today. He is also blessed with four children and eight grandchildren. Their love will give Ed the strength to serve our country in his new capacity.

I urge the Senate to swiftly confirm Ed Schafer as the 29th Secretary of Agriculture. I look forward to having this good and decent man as a member of my Cabinet. Congratulations.

[*At this point, Secretary-designate Schafer made brief remarks.*]

The President. Thank you, sir. Good job.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:05 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary-designate Schafer.

Proclamation 8195—National Adoption Month, 2007

October 31, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

During National Adoption Month, we recognize the adoptive and foster families who have shared their homes and hearts with children in need, and we encourage more Americans to consider adopting young people of all ages.

Families who adopt show the generous spirit of our Nation. Every child desires a permanent home, and when parents adopt a child to love as their own, lives are forever changed. For parents, the decision to adopt a child is among life's greatest and happiest turning points. On November 17, families across the country will celebrate National Adoption Day by finalizing their adoptions, and each one of these homes will be richer for the addition of new family members.

My Administration is committed to promoting adoption of children of all ages. We are working to bring together more children with loving, adoptive parents through the Collaboration to AdoptUsKids at adoptuskids.org and by providing States with financial assistance through the Adoption Incentives Program. The Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program helps improve care and services to children and families and ensure more young people in America have a caring, secure, and permanent home. Together, these efforts are building a brighter future for our youth.

During National Adoption Month, we honor adoptive and foster parents as they raise children of conviction and character. By accepting the gift of these children, parents are helping shape lives and contributing to the strength of our great Nation.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 2007 as National Adoption Month. I call upon all

Americans to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities to honor adoptive families and to participate in efforts to find permanent homes for waiting children.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirty-first day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-second.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:38 a.m., November 1, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on November 2.

Proclamation 8196—National American Indian Heritage Month, 2007

October 31, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

National American Indian Heritage Month is an opportunity to honor the many contributions of American Indians and Alaska Natives and to recognize the strong and living traditions of the first people to call our land home.

American Indians and Alaska Natives continue to shape our Nation by preserving the heritage of their ancestors and by contributing to the rich diversity that is our country's strength. Their dedicated efforts to honor their proud heritage have helped others gain a deeper understanding of the vibrant and ancient customs of the Native American community. We also express our gratitude to the American Indians and Alaska Natives who serve in our Nation's military and work to extend the blessings of liberty around the world.

My Administration is committed to supporting the American Indian and Alaska Native cultures. In June, I signed the "Native American Home Ownership Opportunity Act of 2007," which reauthorizes the Indian Housing Loan Guarantee Program, guaranteeing loans for home improvements and expanding home ownership for Native American families. Working with tribal governments, we will strive for greater security, healthier lifestyles, better schools, and new economic opportunities for American Indians and Alaska Natives.

During National American Indian Heritage Month, we underscore our commitment to working with tribes on a government-to-government basis and to supporting tribal sovereignty and self-determination. During this month, I also encourage Federal agencies to continue their work with tribal governments to ensure sound cooperation. Efforts such as on-line training programs will improve interagency collaboration in the Federal Indian Affairs community and help to strengthen relationships with tribes, building a brighter future for all our citizens.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 2007 as National American Indian Heritage Month. I call upon all Americans to commemorate this month with appropriate programs and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirty-first day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-second.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:38 a.m., November 1, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on November 2.

Proclamation 8197—National Family Caregivers Month, 2007

October 31, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Each year during National Family Caregivers Month, we celebrate all those who dedicate themselves to caring for others and