



## Congress of the United States House of Representatives

December 2006

Dear Community Leader:

Each year at this time, I am pleased to provide a comprehensive report of my major activities in the Congress during the preceding year. The annual report is designed for community leaders in the Ninth District who have taken a larger than average interest in this work and who have participated with me in achieving these successes.

My highest priority is the creation of new jobs for the region. Highlighted in the report is the progress made in the last year in the multi-faceted strategy to enhance economic development in the many sectors of Southwest Virginia's economy, including attracting technology based jobs to the region, encouraging the formation of small businesses, improving transportation, expanding tourism, obtaining funding for community infrastructure projects, advancing the telecommunications network and supporting the regional farm economy.

I am also pleased to note the greater benefits we are receiving through the innovative use of information technology. We now have more hospitals and clinics equipped with broadband-connected telemedicine capabilities than any other Congressional district in the nation, and the fiber-optic based distance learning network provides instruction in advanced courses in 55 electronic classrooms throughout the district.

I hope you will take a few minutes to review the report. Your comments on the matters it contains and your suggestions for new projects to advance the quality of life of Southwest Virginians will be most welcome.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Boucher".

Rick Boucher  
Member of Congress

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## **I. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: MY TOP PRIORITY**

### **A. SHOWCASING SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA**

Since its inception in 1987, my Showcasing Southwest Virginia program has stimulated the region's economy by bringing more than 4,500 jobs to the Ninth District. The program's successes continued in 2006:

1. **Results Call Center Opens in Patrick County** – In September, The Results Companies, a nationwide provider of customer support services for Fortune 500 clients in the telecommunications, insurance and financial sectors, agreed to my request to place a new Results Customer Service Center in the Rich Creek Corporate Park near Stuart. Following participation by the company in my Showcasing Southwest Virginia Program, Results announced its intention to hire 65 individuals. However, based on a highly successful launch, Results has now hired a total of 175 employees at the Stuart facility.
2. **Results Brings New Jobs to Scott County** – Another major success for my Showcasing Southwest Virginia program was achieved earlier this year when Results opened a new call center in Duffield. This state of the art facility has created 175 new jobs and offers competitive pay and excellent benefits for Scott County residents. Employees provide essential services to customers of Motorola, as well as support for a major healthcare insurance company
3. **Cingular Wireless Adds Additional Jobs in Russell County** – Earlier this year, I announced that Cingular Wireless, which I introduced to Southwest Virginia in 2002, would be adding 225 new customer service representatives positions at its facility in Lebanon. Cingular has far exceeded its original job creation expectations, currently employing 675 citizens from Russell County and throughout the region.
4. **Showcasing Southwest Virginia Tours Promote Region to Technology Companies** – In 2006, my Showcasing Southwest Virginia program focused primarily on the attraction of technology-based companies to the region. I arranged and conducted eight tours for corporate executives of 6 technology-based companies who visited the 9<sup>th</sup> district at my invitation during the year. My goal is to encourage a range of businesses such as database management, software design and high-end technical support services to invest in Southwest Virginia. The attraction of these companies will be a continuing priority in 2007.

## **B. TOURISM: A MAJOR SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA ECONOMIC POTENTIAL**

A major focus of my office's economic development agenda is the expansion of Southwest Virginia's tourism economy which has tremendous growth potential. With the state's best outdoor experience and Virginia's most interesting cultural offerings, we truly have much to attract the traveling public.

1. **Federal Funding Obtained for William King Regional Arts Center**– At my request, two provisions of federal funding totaling \$2.7 million have been provided for a major expansion project at the William King Regional Arts Center in Abingdon. The William King Regional Arts Center contributes substantially to the impressive growth of the tourism economy in Washington County, and these federal funds will build upon that success by enabling the construction of a new Artisans Courtyard facility on the campus of the Arts Center. When completed, the Cultural Campus Expansion will double the Arts Center's size and further Washington County's tourism economy by showcasing Southwest Virginia's rich cultural and artistic heritage.

2. **New Winery & Vineyard Enhances Tourism Economy** – A new Winery and Vineyard has opened in Wythe County with the aid of a \$225,000 loan from the Ninth District Development Fund, which is a federal loan program I established to assist tourism development in our region. The owners of the West Wind Winery and Vineyard have constructed a 4500 square foot winery building, complete with a dining room for special events and a wine production facility. Virginia wineries have become a major tourism destination, and the establishment of the West Wind Winery will offer the traveling public yet another incentive to visit our region.
3. **Funding Provided to Increase Tourism Visitation Along the Blue Ridge Parkway** – At my urging, the U.S. Department of Transportation has approved a \$438,000 federal grant for the purpose of increasing tourist visitation along the Blue Ridge Parkway. The funds will be used to develop a marketing plan which will highlight the many attractions and destinations available to the traveling public along the Parkway through the development of a user friendly website, electronic marketing, ad campaigns and trade shows. This provision of federal funding will further advance our tourism development efforts in Floyd, Patrick, Roanoke and the Twin Counties region.
4. **New Tourism Task Force Established in Grayson County** – Earlier this year, I worked with the Grayson County Board of Supervisors to establish a task force to develop a comprehensive strategy to better utilize the existing public and private tourism assets of the County. The task force has recommended creating a permanent tourism board in Grayson County in order to assure that these assets are used in a creative and effective manner to enhance and diversify the economy in Grayson County and establish new opportunities for small business.
5. **\$200,000 in Federal Funds Obtained for Hillsville's Carter Home Restoration** - Federal monies I requested in the amount of \$225,000 are being applied to the renovation of the Historic Carter Home for a variety of community uses. Among other improvements, the porch and veranda will be rebuilt, an elevator will be refurbished, and general spaces throughout the building will be upgraded for community meetings, dinners and cultural displays. The George L. Carter Home is the centerpiece of the revitalization of historic downtown Hillsville. Last year, I obtained federal funding in the amount of \$250,000 for a variety of improvements in the downtown area, including improvements to storefronts, a walking trail and additional exterior improvements to the Carter Home.
6. **Virginia Motorsports Museum and Hall of Fame Opens in Patrick County** – I recently participated in the opening of the Virginia Motorsports Museum and Hall of Fame in Stuart, which chronicles Virginia's extensive racing history and tradition through displays of authentic race cars, exhibits on racing history as well as information on contemporary motorsports in the Commonwealth. The nearby Martinsville Speedway provides a \$30 million economic boost to the region each race day, and local businesses report up to a 30% increase in business during race weeks. The Museum will be an added attraction for tourists who are visiting the area during the Martinsville races and will advance the tourism economy in Patrick County.

## C. ENCOURAGING SMALL BUSINESS FORMATION

1. **Incubators Let New Businesses Share Costs and Obtain Technical Assistance** – In 1998, I created regional planning task forces and launched a Ninth District-wide effort to build small business incubators as a means of expanding the number of locally-owned small businesses in the region. The construction of small business incubators within the reach of all residents will assure that technical assistance and the opportunity to reduce start-up costs are available to each person who wants to bring his or her good ideas to the commercial market. In 2006, these incubator projects advanced:
  - ***Possible New Incubator in Wytheville Under Study:*** I recently obtained a \$10,000 federal grant to conduct a feasibility study for the possible construction of a small business incubator in Wytheville which would also serve Bland County.
  - ***Alleghany County/City of Covington Business Incubator:*** I am working with Alleghany County and City of Covington officials to develop a small business incubator which will serve both the county and the city. A feasibility study has been completed for the development of the new facility.
  - ***Pioneer Center Receives Federal Funding:*** At my request, a federal grant in the amount of \$135,500 has been provided for infrastructure improvements at the Pioneer Center Small Business Incubator in Duffield. The Pioneer Center is a highly successful incubator that now houses 270 employees, including 175 from the new Results Center, which I attracted to Scott County through my Showcasing Southwest Virginia program.
2. **Revolving Loan Fund Established for Small Businesses in Dickenson County** –A \$75,000 federal grant has been awarded to the Dickenson County Industrial Development Authority (IDA). The money will be used by the IDA to establish a micro-enterprise revolving loan fund which will provide low interest loans to small and emerging businesses in Dickenson County. The low interest loans will be available to small businesses which have fewer than 50 employees.
3. **Mount Roger's PDC Loan Program Receives Federal Boost** – A \$500,000 low-interest federal loan has been awarded to the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission (MRPDC) to augment its existing revolving loan fund which provides capital to emerging businesses in Washington, Smyth, Bland, Carroll, Grayson, and Wythe Counties and the cities of Galax and Bristol. It is anticipated that the availability of the additional loan funding will result in the creation and retention of at least 200 jobs in the area.
4. **New River Valley Airport Now a Federally Funded Port of Entry** - In April, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security approved my request to officially designate the New River Valley Airport as a federally funded "Port of Entry," enabling the Airport to receive annual federal funding to finance the costs of operating and maintaining the Customs Office located

there. Previously, the office was financed with funds provided by local governments. The presence of the customs office has been of substantial benefit to companies in the New River and Roanoke Valleys that engage in international trade. The Port of Entry designation will provide further economic development opportunities for these businesses.

5. **Whitetop Library to Offer E-Commerce Classes for Small Business Owners** -At my urging, a federal grant in the amount of \$50,000 is being provided for the purchase of computers at the new Whitetop public library building, which will enable the library to offer e-commerce classes to area small businesses. Prospective and current small business owners will be able to enroll in the new e-commerce classes at no cost and learn how to design and operate a website for their businesses. The newly designed websites will then be hosted by the library free of charge.

#### **D. EXPANDING OUR TELECOMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITIES**

One of my priorities is to ensure that Southwest Virginia communities have access to advanced telecommunications capabilities as an aid to the attraction of technology based employers. Today, I am pleased to note that many of the communities in our region are making great strides in the deployment of broadband networks.

**1. Construction Begins on Major Broadband Deployment Project in the Coal Producing Region** - Using a \$3 million federal grant, which I obtained from the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Coalfield Coalition, a non-profit organization comprised of the LENOWISCO and Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commissions, is now deploying high capacity optical fiber along 160 miles of right of way in Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Russell, Tazewell and Wise Counties. With a connection to the backbone, homes and businesses will have access to high-speed Internet services. Construction is expected to be completed for the entire project by the Summer of 2007.

**2. Funding Secured for Ewing Broadband Project** -More than \$454,000 in federal grant funding is being provided at my request for the establishment of high-speed broadband services in the Ewing community of Lee County. The federal funds will be used to deploy fiber optic lines across the "last mile" to approximately 40 homes and 10 businesses. This funding will also provide free broadband service for two years for the Ewing Elementary School and the Western Lee County Health Clinic. In addition to the broadband services which will soon become available, the federal funding will be used to purchase 10 new computer workstations to expand the public Internet access site at the Lonesome Pine Regional Library Community Computer Center in Ewing.

**3. Federal Funds Will Provide Broadband Services to the Town of Cleveland** – Broadband services will be established in the Town of Cleveland in Russell County with the aid of a \$220,000 grant, which has been provided at my request. Residents and businesses in the Town of Cleveland currently have no access to high-speed broadband services. The funding will also be used to purchase 10 new computer workstations to establish a public, free of charge Internet access site at the Town Hall in Cleveland. High speed Internet service will also be extended to

the Cleveland Police Department, Cleveland Volunteer Fire Department, and Cleveland Elementary School at no cost for two years.

**4. Funding Obtained for Chilhowie & Saltville Broadband Deployment Plan**- A federal grant in the amount of \$10,000 has been provided at my urging for the creation of a strategic telecommunications plan which will point the way for extending high-speed Internet services to additional businesses and to residential users in the Towns of Chilhowie and Saltville. Planners will assess the needs of area businesses and residents currently unable to connect to the existing fiber optic backbone and identify the best way to extend high-speed Internet service from the backbone over the “last mile” to Internet users.

**5. Broadband Services Established in the Town of Independence** – In 2006, the Town of Independence began providing broadband services, including affordable high-speed Internet access, to businesses and residents in Independence. This project, which was financed through a federal grant I previously obtained, is making broadband services available to public buildings such as the Independence Town Hall, schools within the Town, the Grayson County Sheriff’s office, the Grayson County Public Library, the 1908 Courthouse, and the Grayson County Courthouse. With a new state-of-the-art fiber-optic backbone in place, plans are now underway to extend broadband services wirelessly to serve a larger portion of the Town of Independence and nearby areas in Grayson County.

**6. Bland County Launches High-Speed Wireless Network** - Earlier this year, I visited the Town of Bland to participate in the launch of its new wireless high-speed Internet network. The new network, which is the first of its kind in Southwest Virginia, is bringing high-speed Internet services at no charge to residents through a technology known as wireless mesh networking. The availability of high-speed Internet access at no cost will be an attractive feature to many travelers who pass by the town on the Appalachian Trail or Interstate 77 and to industries seeking locations for expansion.

**7. Nickelsville Fiber Optic Network Launched** – The Nickelsville Fiber Optic Network in Scott County has been completed, and high-speed broadband services were made available through the fiber to the home project in 2006 to 392 homes and 34 businesses in Nickelsville. In addition, a new public Internet access through the fiber and the home project site has been established at the Nickelsville Community Center, and 10 computer workstations are now available for use without charge for Scott County residents.

## **E. INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY ADVANCEMENT**

**1. Funding in 2006 Gives More Southwest Virginians Access to Water and Wastewater Services** – In 2006, more than \$27 million in federal funding was awarded to construct and improve drinking water systems and public wastewater systems throughout Southwest Virginia. Obtaining the federal funding to place publicly provided drinking water in Southwest Virginia homes is a high priority of my office. More than 10,500 Southwest Virginia homes will receive new or improved publicly provided drinking water or sewer

service as a result of projects launched with federal funds in 2006. In 2007, I will be seeking a comparable level of federal funding for further system development.

2. **Federal Funding Enables Feasibility Study for Regional Water System** – A federal grant in the amount of \$60,000 is enabling the New River Valley Planning District Commission to conduct a feasibility study for a regional water system in the New River Valley. The study will examine interconnecting the public water systems in Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, and Pulaski Counties, and the City of Radford with the goal of enhancing the provision of public drinking water to citizens throughout the region.
3. **New Bluefield Town Hall Now Complete** – In the fall, I was pleased to visit Bluefield to celebrate the formal opening of the new Bluefield Town Hall. This state-of-the-art facility will house the Town’s administrative services, police department, Town Council chambers, public works department, parks and recreations department, and the zoning and planning department. \$700,000 in federal grant money was made available by the Federal Emergency Management Agency for the project at my request.
4. **Route 16 Receives Federal Funding** – At my urging, the U.S. Department of Transportation is providing a federal grant in the amount of \$400,000 for improvements to the Route 16 bridge spanning Fox Creek near the Town of Troutdale in Grayson County. The funding will help replace the bridge decking through the use of unique prefabricated construction materials, which will improve the durability of the structure while decreasing construction time.
5. **Federal Funds Enhance Russell County Technology Park** – A \$500,000 federal grant will be used to construct a new access road linking the Russell County Technology Park with the GardenSide Housing site, a housing development planned for the employees of Northrop Grumman and CGI-AMS who are being hired to fill more than 700 technology-based jobs that are on the way to Russell County. This provision of federal funding will help with infrastructure improvements required to accommodate the needs of these new businesses and others to come.
6. **Lover’s Gap Industrial Site Receives Federal Boost** – A new 1.6 miles access road linking the Lover’s Gap Industrial Site in Buchanan County with State Route 83 is being constructed with \$500,000 in federal grant funding which I obtained from Appalachian Regional Commission. The 1,800 acre site will provide space for a variety of future business and commercial development interests, and this provision of federal funding will help make the site accessible for users.
7. **Southwest Virginia First Responders Receive Federal Funding**- During 2006, I participated with a number of Ninth District fire departments, rescue squads and police and sheriffs departments in the successful effort to obtain more than \$1.5 million in federal assistance for the purchase of new equipment.
  - ***Local Police and Sheriffs Departments Receive Federal Assistance:*** Several police and sheriffs offices throughout Southwest Virginia received federal funding to purchase new

police vehicles to improve safety for law enforcement officers and residents of the region. The Pennington Gap Police Department, Pembroke Police Department, Buchanan County Sheriff's Office, Pulaski Police Department, Galax Police Department and Independence Police Department were awarded funding which will aid in the purchase of more than 7 new police vehicles. The vehicles will be outfitted with lights, painting and lettering, a prisoner restraint divider, and radio equipment.

- ***Rescue Squads Receive Federal Boost:*** Four area rescue squads received federal funding to purchase new vehicles and equipment. The Wise County Rescue Squad, Norton Rescue Squad and New Garden Rescue Squad received federal funding to purchase new ambulances and related equipment. Additionally, Giles County Rescue Squad received federal assistance for the purchase of a swift water rescue vehicle to respond to emergencies occurring on the New River.
- ***Communities Receive Federal Assistance for Fire Departments:*** During 2006, I participated with a number of Ninth District fire departments in the successful effort to obtain federal assistance for the purchase of new equipment. Local fire departments which received federal grant funding include: Jonesville, Dublin, Cana, Norton, Mount Rogers, Wytheville, Simmonsville, Green Spring, Rich Creek, Hillsville, Dryden, and Council.

8. **Craig County Receives Funding for Flood Warning Systems** – A federal grant in the amount of \$45,750 is being provided for the purchase of Automated Flood Warning Systems in Craig County. The new warning systems will help federal, state, and local officials monitor conditions such as rain fall amounts and river levels which could result in flood conditions. The flood warning systems are used statewide by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management to identify where there are flooding potentials. Stream flow and rain gauges will be positioned in locations throughout the County and will be connected to alarms in the Sheriff's dispatch office in order to alert local officials when flooding occurs or is imminent.

## **F. FARM ECONOMY SUPPORTED**

1. **Value Added Beef Initiative** – Following the success of the regional hair sheep initiative which we launched 3 years ago, in 2006 we encouraged farmers to consider producing value-added, locally finished beef which I believe holds great promise for our agriculture economy. Accordingly, I am working with farmers throughout Southwest Virginia to encourage the emergence of a locally finished, value-added beef industry that will sell its product to local retailers. In July I hosted a Ninth District Value-Added Beef Conference in which experts offered information regarding the economic benefits of value added beef production and the market which exists at the retail level locally for value added beef, as well as techniques

utilized in the raising and care until harvest of beef. I have convened a group of local producers that is working now to move this effort forward in 2007.

2. **Funding Obtained for Value Added Beef Harvesting Facility** – A \$29,000 grant, provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture at my request, will be used to conduct a feasibility study for the location of a new beef harvest facility. The facility would process locally finished, value-added beef for sale to local grocery store chains. The study represents another step in a cooperative effort among beef farmers to build a value-added beef industry and to develop a system for processing their beef locally and marketing it as a specialty product on a regional level.
3. **Hair Sheep Industry Supported** - In April I joined with Virginia Tech officials in announcing that the Southwest Virginia Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Glade Spring would begin research related to our rapidly growing local hair sheep industry. The goal of the research will be to provide farmers in our region with the most complete information available in the nation on many characteristics of hair sheep, which will lead to the highest possible meat quality and methods of improving the breed. I have also joined with the Scott County Hair Sheep Association and a local grocery chain in launching a partnership for lamb production and sales. The retail sales of lamb have been widely successful, and the market offers new prospects for our region's farmers.
4. **Federal Government Provides Disaster Assistance** – Earlier this year, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture declared a federal disaster due to the recent drought conditions. As a result of the declaration, farmers in Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Craig, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Henry, Lee, Montgomery, Patrick, Pulaski, Roanoke, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise and Wythe Counties and the Cities of Radford, Norton, Bristol, and Galax who have suffered crop losses caused by the drought were declared eligible to receive financial assistance from the federal government.

## **G. EDUCATION: PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION**

1. **Packaging Center at Dabney Lancaster Community College Now Open** – Earlier this fall, Dabney Lancaster Community College welcomed its inaugural class at the Virginia Packaging Application Center. This new state of the art facility will provide students with the skills necessary for employment and advancement in the packaging industry, which is one of the fastest growing industries in the nation, and will further higher education and economic development in Alleghany County. Federal funds in the amount of \$469,000, which I obtained in three separate federal appropriations, were used to establish the new Packaging Center.
2. **New Trades Learning Building to be Constructed at the Christiansburg Institute**– At my request, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has provided a low- interest federal loan in the amount of \$1.6 million for the construction of a new Trades Learning Center on the former campus of the historic Christiansburg Institute. The Trades Learning Center will provide vocational training in traditional building trades to students in the New River Valley.

3. **Russell County High-Tech Training Center** – Federal funding totaling \$250,000 is being provided at my request for the new Russell County High Tech Training Center. The House of Representatives approved my request for a \$150,000 appropriation, and a \$100,000 federal grant is being provided by the Appalachian Regional Commission. The funding will be used to equip the new high tech training center with computers, telephones, office furniture, and other materials to be used for training purposes in order to help workers prepare for the more than 700 high tech jobs on the way to Russell County.
4. **Southwest Virginia Community College** - A federal grant in the amount of \$28,137 is being used by Southwest Virginia Community College (SVCC) to enhance entrepreneurial and educational opportunities at the school's Appalachian Arts Center. SVCC will now offer entrepreneurship training to local artisans, and will create a marketplace at the Appalachian Arts Center where the artisans' products, such as hand-made items or original CDs, can be sold locally or over the Internet.
5. **\$4 Million Federal Appropriation Will Develop Network Based Crisis Management System at Virginia Tech** –At my urging, the U.S. Congress approved a federal appropriation in the amount of \$4 million for the development of a network based modeling system at Virginia Tech, which will help homeland defense agencies manage their response to bio terrorist events. The new Comprehensive National Incident Characterization and Management System (CNICMS) at Virginia Tech will work in coordination with the Department of Defense and will provide disaster management decision makers at the federal, state, and local levels with real time information about the status of a community or population center during a crisis situation.
6. **Virginia Tech University Library** – With the benefit of a \$165,000 federal grant, the Virginia Tech University Library will expand use of the library's LibX tool, which allows users of academic and public libraries to search library resources directly from the Web. The LibX program alerts individuals searching the Internet to available library resources and content such as journal articles and book titles, which relate to their search.
7. **Southwest Virginia Education & Training Network Expands** – The federal Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has provided a grant in the amount of \$500,000 to update and enhance the Southwest Virginia Education and Training Network (SVETN), which I launched in the mid 1990's. SVETN enables students from throughout a number of counties to join together in receiving instruction in mathematics, the sciences, foreign languages, economics, psychology and other courses, which due to small class sizes, cannot be offered school by school. The federal funds will be used to upgrade the Network's digital technology capabilities enabling teachers to access a broad range of educational materials and bring new enrichment activities to their classrooms.
8. **Federal Grants Improve Safety in Grayson & Wise County Schools** – More than \$200,000 in federal grant money is being provided at my request for the development and enhancement of emergency response plans at public schools in Wise & Grayson Counties.

9. **Southwest Virginia Public Libraries Receive Federal Boost** – At my urging, a low interest federal loan in the amount of \$10,200 is being provided to the Galax-Carroll Regional Library Foundation for the continued implementation of a library automation system. In 2005, I obtained a \$50,000 grant to begin the project, which is expected to be complete in January 2007. The new system will connect all seven of the libraries in the Wythe-Grayson and Galax-Carroll regional systems and will enable residents to access the collections and holdings of all of the libraries remotely, without making a trip to the local branch.

## **H. TRANSPORTATION: THE LINK TO A BROADER ECONOMY**

1. **Grundy Flood and Redevelopment Project Advances** – Earlier this year, I took part in the construction start for the three final major elements of the Grundy Flood Control and Redevelopment Project, which when completed will create new economic life for the Town of Grundy and Buchanan County. The Virginia Department of Transportation has commenced construction on the Route 460 Bypass around the Town and the levee that the Bypass will be built upon, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had begun constructing a new ring-wall along Slate Creek. The levee and ring wall projects will accomplish the dual purposes of providing a modern and efficient 4 lane highway around the Town and providing the existing downtown business district with flood protection to effectively protect the Town in a 100-year flood event. A federal appropriation in the amount \$5.6 million, which Congress provided last year at my request is financing the cost of the ring wall project. More than \$84 million in federal funding has been provided to date at my request for the project.
2. **Federal Funds Provided for Coalfield Connector** – In July, I addressed the Commonwealth Transportation Board and urged the Virginia Department of Transportation to honor its commitment to the Coalfields Expressway. Last year, the U.S. Congress at my request approved a federal appropriation in the amount of \$12 million to make U.S. Route 460 in Virginia four lanes across the length of the road, providing easier access to the Breaks Interstate Park and constituting the first leg of the Coalfields Expressway.
3. **Improving the Ninth District's Airports** – The presence of well-developed airports is an essential tool in attracting new employers to the region. In 2006, the following successes were achieved in improving the Ninth District's airports:
- ***New River Valley Airport:*** At my request, the U.S. House of Representatives has approved a federal appropriation in the amount of \$600,000, for necessary infrastructure improvements at the New River Valley Airport. The funds will be used to rehabilitate the Airport's runway, which will allow aircraft to take off and land more safely.
  - ***Virginia Tech/Montgomery Regional Airport:*** The Department of Transportation, at my request, has approved a federal grant in the amount of \$4.6 million to expand the runway safety zone at the Virginia Tech/Montgomery Regional Airport. The expansion project will provide an added measure of security to aircraft using the field.

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- ***Twin County Airport:*** Earlier this year I secured a federal appropriation in the amount of \$200,000, which will be used to help expand and enhance the Airport's existing runway safety zone. The presence of the enhanced safety zone will allow the Twin County Airport to accommodate larger aircraft such as corporate jets.

## **I. NINTH DISTRICT CONGRESSIONAL CONFERENCES CONDUCTED IN 2006**

1. **Ninth District Emergency Responders Conference**– In March, I hosted a Ninth District First Responders Conference to help connect Southwest Virginia firefighters, police officers, and rescue squads with available funding sources on the federal and state levels. It is vital to protect the safety of those who protect us by providing the best equipment, and the Emergency Responders Conference helped to accomplish this goal.
2. **Mesh Network Architectures Workshops** – In February I hosted well attended workshops in four locations across the Ninth District, which provided information to local governments and Internet service providers on a new wireless means for delivering broadband through mesh networking architectures. This new highly efficient technology which uses unlicensed spectrum is now being employed in the Town of Bland and is an inexpensive means through which high-speed wireless Internet access can be delivered to residents and businesses.
3. **Ninth District Value Added Beef Conference** - The production of locally finished, value-added beef offers a promising economic opportunity for those interested in beef farming throughout Southwest Virginia. In order to assure that our region's agricultural community is fully aware of this opportunity, I hosted a Ninth District Value Added Beef conference in July. More than 300 farmers heard presentations from a series of exceptional speakers, which focused on the genetics and forage of value-added beef, as well as the economics and the challenges involved in such production.
4. **Virginia Coal Conference** – In conjunction with the Eastern Coal Council, I hosted a conference addressing matters of importance to the future of Virginia's coal industry and reported on my work as Ranking Member of the Energy and Air Quality subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, including my efforts to advance clean coal technologies.

## **II. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

As co-founder and co-chairman of the Congressional Internet Caucus and as a senior member of the Committees on Energy and Commerce and the Judiciary, I am extensively involved in the development of federal policy for telecommunications, intellectual property and the Internet. In 2006, these policy initiatives included:

- A. **Network Neutrality** - To ensure that the Internet remains an open medium where users can access any lawful content, applications and services, I co-wrote H.R. 5273, the Network

Neutrality Act of 2006, and H.R. 5417, the Internet Freedom and Nondiscrimination Act. These measures would prohibit a broadband provider from interfering with users' access to lawful Internet content, applications or services and their ability to attach any unharmed devices to the broadband network. They would require a broadband provider to give users accurate information about the speed, nature and limitations of their broadband service and would require a broadband provider, if it prioritizes or offers enhanced quality of service to data of a particular type, to prioritize or offer enhanced quality of service to all data of that type at no charge.

- B. Universal Service Reform** – I have introduced legislation to update and ensure the sustainability of the Universal Service Fund (USF), which helps defray the cost of providing local telephone service in rural and other hard to serve areas. A variety of new providers of voice services which are exempt from making payments into the USF, such as VoIP providers, have entered the market, resulting in greater USF funding burdens being placed on traditional service providers. My measure responds to these developments and will ensure the continued availability of the USF to support the provision of communications services in rural and underserved areas. It broadens the base of contributions into the fund, controls distributions from the fund and allows use of the fund for broadband deployment.
- C. Local Roanoke Market TV Stations Now Available for Patrick County DIRECTV Customers** - At my urging, satellite television provider DIRECTV is now providing 'local into local' service, through which local broadcast stations are uplinked to the satellite and then retransmitted to satellite television customers in Patrick County. As a result, DIRECTV customers in Patrick County can now view the NBC (WSLS, Channel 10) and CBS (WDBJ, Channel 7) stations from Roanoke, which provide subscribers with more localized newscasts.
- D. Internet Caucus Membership Continues to Grow** – With a membership of more than 180 U.S. Representatives and Senators, the bi-partisan, bi-cameral Internet Caucus which I co-founded in 1996 and now-co-chair has become the most active caucus in the Congress. It is an increasingly valuable educational forum as Congress addresses a range of policy issues related to the Internet.

### **III. HEALTH CARE: IMPROVING ACCESS FOR SOUTHWEST VIRGINIANS**

- A. New Health Care Center Will Serve Elderly Residents in Lee, Scott, And Wise Counties**  
I recently secured a major provision of federal funding in the amount of \$3.4 million for Mountain Empire Older Citizens (MEOC) to construct a new PACE center in Big Stone Gap, which will greatly expand the resources available to elderly residents in Lee, Scott and Wise Counties and the City of Norton. PACE is an acronym for Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly, and residents enrolled in the PACE program will be able to live in their own homes, while receiving health care and therapy services either at home or at the new PACE Center. The Center, which offers an alternative to institutionalized care, will include an adult

day care center, examination space for a medical doctor and nurse practitioner, and clinic space for physical, speech, and other types of therapies.

- B. **MEOC PACE Program Advances** – A \$500,000 federal grant, which I obtained from the Department of Health and Human Services, will be used to meet the necessary requirements so that the new MEOC PACE Center can accept Medicare and Medicaid insurance. With the benefit of the federal funds, a Director and a Medical Director will be hired for the PACE program who will oversee the hiring of additional staff, recruit patients, and work to partner with other regional medical providers. This process is expected to be completed within the next year, and it is anticipated that 41 new jobs will be created through the hiring for the PACE program.
  
- C. **Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizen's Receives Funding to Implement PACE Program** – The Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens (AASC), which provides a variety of support services for elderly residents of Buchanan, Dickenson, Russell and Tazewell Counties, has received a \$500,000 grant from the Center for Medicare & Medicaid services to implement a new PACE program. The PACE program will expand the availability and convenience of healthcare and other services for many elder residents in the communities that AASC serves.
  
- D. **New Community Health Clinic Opens in Appalachia** – A new community health clinic has opened in the Town of Appalachia and is now providing a variety of health care services to uninsured and underinsured residents in Wise County. The Appalachia Community Health Clinic offers primary medical care, x-ray services, lab work and the Pharmacy Connect Program and is the first such facility to offer these services in the County on a sliding fee scale based on a patient's income. The clinic expects to serve 2500 patients annually, and 40%, or 1000, of those patients will be uninsured. An annual U.S. Department of Health and Human Services grant of \$371,250 is helping to support the clinic's operations.
  
- E. **Bland Medical Clinic to Expand** - A low-interest federal loan in the amount of \$1,279,790 has been provided at my request for a major expansion and renovation project at the Bland County Medical Clinic. The construction project is now underway. The expansion project will more than double the size of the Bland Medical Clinic, enabling the Clinic to meet a steadily growing demand for services while continuing to deliver low cost quality health care to the residents of Bland, Wythe, Giles and Tazewell Counties.
  
- F. **New Clinic and Community Center Coming to Meadowview** – Construction is underway on a new health clinic and community center in the Town Meadowview with the aid of a low-interest federal loan in the amount of \$251,000. The new clinic will feature eight exam rooms and four doctor's offices and will provide primary health care services, immunizations, family planning, health physicals, lab work, minor emergency care, and mental health counseling. It is anticipated that construction will be completed in January, 2007 on a new building in the Meadowview Town Square which will house the clinic.
  
- G. **Tazewell Community Health Clinic Opens** – This fall, the new 2400 square foot Tazewell Community Health clinic began accepting patients, and it is expected to provide health care

services to more than 3800 patients during the next year. The new clinic offers six rooms for patient examinations and is staffed by a physician, a family nurse practitioner, a nurse and a clinic manager.

- H. Whitetop Community Health Opens** – In the fall, I took part in the formal opening of the new Whitetop Community Health Clinic. Patients will be able to receive a number of medical services at this Grayson County facility, including pediatric, adolescent, adult and geriatric care, laboratory services, emergency medicine, annual physicals and minor surgeries.
- I. Damascus Clinic Expansion Complete** – The Town of Damascus has received a \$700,000 grant from the U.S. Dept. Of Housing and Urban Development for a major expansion project at the Damascus Medical Center. Construction on the expansion project was completed in August. The additional space is accommodating one new physician, one new dentist, and one nurse practitioner as well as the equipment needed for a telemedicine site at the clinic. The expansion will also allow the clinic's pharmacy to provide medications at a reduced cost to approximately 1000 additional patients this year.

#### **IV. 2006 LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES**

- A. Legislation to Create First Veteran's Cemetery in Southwest Virginia Enacted into Law** – The Congress has approved and the President has signed into law legislation I sponsored which takes the first essential step in establishing a much needed cemetery for veterans in Southwest Virginia. At present the closest veteran's cemetery is hundreds of miles away in the eastern part of the state. The legislation authorizes transfer of ownership of federal land in Pulaski County to the State of Virginia for siting of the cemetery. 85 acres of land currently owned by the U.S. Army will be conveyed under the new law for the purpose of creating a final resting place for area veterans and their family members. A veterans' cemetery in the region will serve as a final resting place and lasting tribute to the thousands of area service men and women, and this new law which provides the necessary land for the new state cemetery represents a significant step towards accomplishing this goal.
- B. Legislation Introduced to Promote the Use of Coal to Liquids Technology** - In September, I introduced legislation to promote the use of coal-to-liquids, a technology which enables the production of transportation fuels from coal. The legislation I've authored would establish price certainty, thereby incenting investments in coal to liquids facilities. Coal liquefaction has been in use since World War II, and South Africa today uses the technology to produce approximately 40 percent of its transportation fuels. By using our nation's most abundant natural resource - coal - to produce transportation fuels, we can address fuel cost concerns, make our nation less reliant on imports from politically unstable regions of the world and simultaneously benefit our domestic coal industry.
- C. Legislation to Create Strategic Refinery Reserve Introduced** – In May, I introduced legislation to protect the nation's refinery capacity by establishing a federal Strategic Refinery Reserve (SRR), which will deliver refined petroleum products to the market during

energy supply emergencies. The legislation builds upon the success of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve by taking the commonsense step of establishing a reserve which can produce refined petroleum products. The presence of such a reserve will ensure the availability of emergency refinery capacity - a need which has been clearly illustrated by catastrophic hurricanes, which severely damaged oil refineries in the gulf coast.

- D. Legislation to Deter Internet Gambling Signed Into Law** – The President has signed into law legislation I coauthored which takes a positive first step towards restricting the practice of Internet gambling. Offshore Internet gambling websites take billions of dollars out of our economy each year, damage families, and serve as vehicles for money laundering.
- E. Congress Approves Legislation to Preserve Historic Konnarock School** – Legislation which I introduced to preserve the Historic Konnarock Lutheran Girls School has been approved by the Congress. The legislation authorizes the transfer the Konnarock School property from the U.S. Forest Service to the Evangelical Lutheran Coalition for Mission in Appalachia, which will restore the school building and property consistent with its historic status for a variety of community uses. When the renovations to the Konnarock School are complete, the facility will be used as a retreat center. Additionally, the Coalition plans to partner with colleges in the region to establish an environmental learning center archive of the history of the school and the surrounding communities including Konnarock, Green Cove and Whitetop.
- F. Legislation to Transfer Ownership of Federal Fish Hatcheries in Wythe and Craig County to Virginia to Become Law** – The U.S. Congress has given final approval to legislation I sponsored, which enables the transfer of ownership of two federal fish hatcheries in Wythe and Craig Counties to the State of Virginia in order to ensure their continued operation. The hatcheries, located in Wytheville and Paint Bank have an estimated combined economic effect of \$40 million annually and produced a combined total of approximately 290,729 pounds of trout during Fiscal Year 2005. The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) has successfully operated the these two facilities since 1983, under a 25 year lease agreement with the federal government, which is set to expire in 2008, and all parties are in agreement that a title transfer before that expiration date is appropriate.