

Proudly Serving Louisiana's Fifth District



Congressman Rodney Alexander

The Capitol Hill Courant



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Proposed SCHIP expansion abandons program's purpose

This fall, one of the most debated issues across the country and on Capitol Hill continues to be the reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

While most Americans agree on the importance of continuing this vital program, which presently assists over 100,000 Louisiana families with obtaining health insurance for their children, the major legislation to expand the program met strong opposition – leading all the way up to the White House.

In early October, the President vetoed legislation to expand SCHIP, an action many members of Congress believe was necessary in order to protect the original purpose of the program – to provide health insurance to children in low-income families who cannot afford private insurance, but make too much money to qualify for Medicaid. On Oct. 18, the House of Representatives voted to uphold the White House's veto



of the legislation. While serving as Chairman of the Health and Welfare Committee in the Louisiana State Legislature, Rep. Alexander worked to launch the Louisiana Children's

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Surprise tax hike taints farm bill

Alexander hopeful 2002 Farm Bill will be extended

The 2007 Farm Bill, undoubtedly one of the most important pieces of legislation for the people of the 5th District, has been sidetracked by needless add-ons, primarily a large tax increase.

After the House Agriculture Committee agreed on a new farm bill that had wide bipartisan support, the majority leadership tacked on additional provisions. Members of the minority, including Rep. Alexander, felt they had little choice but to vote against the same farm bill they had once so strongly supported.

"The farm bill that came out of the House Agriculture Committee would have been positive for Louisiana and the 5th Congressional District," Alexander said. "However, a large tax increase isn't positive for Louisiana's workers."

Alexander offered a simple explanation for his vote on the farm bill, saying that he very much supports the version of the farm bill approved by the House Agriculture Committee. His vote wasn't against the farm bill as a whole, he explained, but against the last-minute amendments inserted into the bill by the majority leadership.

"My vote is based on my conviction that we need to address these issues in the Senate as well as the Conference Committee," he said.

The add-ons that the minority considers unacceptable included a tax increase for U.S. subsidiaries of companies located outside the United States. These are companies based in foreign countries who operate manufacturing plants and other businesses in the



Marley Oldham (center), manager of Kennedy Rice Driers, and Leon Hill Jr., lead equipment operator, discuss with Rep. Alexander the impact the new farm bill will have on their farming operations.

United States, employing approximately 5.1 million American workers. In Louisiana, some 50,000 people are employed by these companies. One example is the German-based chemical company BASF, which operates three manufacturing plants in Louisiana. These jobs also tend to be well-paying, with an average compensation per worker of \$63,428 annually.

The additional tax the majority wants to hit these companies with could be devastating for our economy. It could lead to the loss of jobs, causing these foreign-based companies to look elsewhere to locate their factories and subsidiary offices. Moreover, such a tax could lead to retaliation by other countries against American

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Illegal immigration growing problem

Illegal immigration is something on the forefront of most Americans' minds these days. Few doubt that the United States faces a serious dilemma. The population of illegal immigrants in this country

is growing frighteningly higher every year. Now is the time to do something proactive to stem the tide of illegal immigrants.

There are an estimated 11.2 million illegal immigrants now residing in the United States. Twenty years ago, there were an estimated 3.2 million. Currently, the number is believed to be increasing by approximately 500,000 a year. At that rate, in 20 years there would be

an additional 10 million illegal immigrants living in the United States with a total population of over 20 million. Because illegal immigrants are undocumented, some estimate the figure to already be nearly that.

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Dear friends,

One of the hardest parts about being a United States congressman is voting "no" on legislation, knowing that I will not be able to personally share my reasons with every individual living in the 5th District.

This year, two of my toughest "no" votes were against the leading legislation to expand the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and the farm bill.

Before these votes, I knew that people at home would understand and respect my vote on these deeply flawed bills, if only I could sit down with them and talk about the provisions in the bills I opposed and why.

Unfortunately, I can't sit down with everyone.

I can only trust that through meeting with as many individuals and groups as possible and sharing my thoughts through means such as radio and television shows, newspaper articles, and materials such as this publication that constituents will hear my thoughts and regard my vote for what it truly was – an effort to do what is best for our district and nation.

This takes a great deal of faith, particularly in those cases when organizations are ready to bombard citizens with misinformation and negative propaganda regarding my opposition to a specific bill, as was the case this October when groups released commercials and automated phone calls in our district containing misleading language about the SCHIP expansion legislation that

was vetoed by President Bush.

But just as the 5th District has placed its faith in me to serve and represent our region in Congress, I trust that the people of our district will seek out the truth about important bills and form their own opinions.

As you may have seen, the front page of this publication includes two pieces on the SCHIP expansion legislation and the farm bill.

Hopefully, the articles will clear up any confusion you may have regarding these two important issues and why the bills passed by Congress during the first go-around

...the SCHIP expansion legislation was an effort to grease the doors to socialized medicine under the guise of an attempt to help poor children. Not only is that bad policy, it is misleading.

were not the right pieces of legislation for our region and country.

Also, I would like to take this opportunity to state my position on these two bills.

I opposed the major SCHIP expansion legislation because the bill did not do what the program exists to do – help poor children. SCHIP exists to provide health insurance to children in families who cannot afford it, but make too much money to receive Medicaid.

The bill would have given states the right to set their

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own eligibility standards, which meant families with higher incomes and even adults could receive the federal money set aside for children.

Taxpayers should not be required to shoulder a burden for those who have the means to be responsible for their own health care. The SCHIP expansion legislation was an effort to grease the doors to socialized medicine under the guise of an attempt to help poor children. Not only is that bad policy, it is misleading. And I will not stand for it, no matter how many commercials special interest groups put out in our district. This issue continues to be at the forefront of congressional debate.

From the start of the 110th Congress, I worked to extend the existing 2002 Farm Bill with the support of 5th District farmers who wanted an extension as well. Unfortunately, Congress did not choose to extend the bill.

A new bill was passed out of the House Agriculture Committee with widespread support. However, surprise additions were tacked onto the bill before it came to floor for a vote.

One of the main "surprise" provisions weakening the bill was a massive tax on insourcing companies operating in the United States who employ more than 5.1 million Americans, according to the Organization for International Investment.

These jobs have an average compensation per worker of \$63,428 annually – 32 percent higher than other typical U.S.-based jobs. In Louisiana, U.S. subsidiaries play a vital role in supporting jobs, employing nearly 50,000 Louisianans.

I knew that farmers – who clearly understand the value of hard work – would respect my effort to protect the jobs of millions of Americans, but I also knew that many would not understand my vote until I had the opportunity to talk with them about this provision and many others in the bill that corrupted the purpose of the farm bill.

Since that vote in late July, I have met with farmers to talk about the bill, and the progress of the legislation continues to be one of my main focuses.

Ironically, it appears likely that Congress will not reach a consensus on a new bill before the old farm bill expires. This means that our original goal – to extend the existing farm bill – may be the outcome, at least for the time being.

Thank you for taking the time to read my thoughts on these bills. Should you have any additional questions, please contact one of my offices by phone or e-mail.

Out and about in August

District work period offers many opportunities to meet with constituents



I joined state director of USDA Rural Development Clyde Holloway in presenting a check for a USDA grant to the Winn Parish Police Jury.



My legislative director, Jack Thompson (back right), meets with members of the National Active & Retired Federal Employees in my Alexandria office.

To see more pictures from August, check out the Louisiana's 5th District Photos section in the Photo Gallery at www.house.gov/alexander.

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Constituent Services

Planning a trip to D.C.? Need help applying for your Social Security or Medicare benefits? Interested in obtaining a federal grant? Rep. Alexander's staff is ready to help you!

Please contact one of Rep. Alexander's offices to seek help with any of the following:

- Obtain help from a caseworker in his Alexandria and Monroe offices with:
 - federal entitlements
 - federal pensions
 - immigration problems
 - military benefits
 - Social Security claims
 - veterans' benefits
 - federal grants (businesses, municipalities and institutions)
- Order a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol Building
- U.S. service academy nominations
- Schedule a staff-led tour of the U.S. Capitol Building
- Request tickets for a White House tour
- Submit a form for presidential greetings
- Apply for a congressional internship

To learn more about the constituent services provided through Rep. Alexander's office, visit his Web site at:

www.house.gov/alexander.

Crop insurance also negatively affected

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companies seeking to invest and do business overseas.

Another last-minute change to the farm bill that the minority found unacceptable – and is actually tied to agriculture – is language that would reduce the effectiveness of crop insurance. This language would inexplicably tie crop insurance rates to oil and natural gas production in the Gulf of Mexico. It would create two new taxes on oil and natural gas produced in the Gulf, taxes that would negatively impact already high energy costs faced by farmers.

The crop insurance rate would be affected by this beginning in 2012, when the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation would be required to base the rate it pays on a calculation of the ratio of the rate set in statute and the expected tax revenues from oil and gas production. The language of the bill would also increase crop insurance premiums for farmers.

These factors – additional taxes that would cost Americans their jobs, additional taxes on domestic oil and gas production when we are already faced with high energy costs, and the weakening of crop insurance – led many members to oppose the farm bill that was presented to

the full House.

The bill still passed the House, but is unlikely to be signed into law with the contentious added provisions. The administration has threatened to veto the farm bill as passed by the House.

The Senate recently finished marking up their version of the farm bill and will be bringing it to the Senate floor for a vote soon. After that, the next step is for the House and Senate to meet in Conference Committee to hammer out the final details. It is hoped that the version that comes out of the Conference Committee will more closely resemble the version that was passed out of the House Agriculture Committee and enjoyed such strong bi-partisan support. Unless it does, the bill faces a likely veto by the White House and further delay.

Once more, an important piece of legislation so vital to our nation and to the people of Louisiana's 5th District in particular has fallen victim to partisanship. Hopefully, the farm bill as originally agreed to in the House committee can ultimately be passed to the benefit of the district's farmers, producers and consumers.

Current SCHIP program not fully utilized

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Health Insurance Program (LaCHIP), which receives funding through SCHIP, and he was proud to have joined colleagues on both sides of the aisle on September 26 in passing legislation to extend the current SCHIP so that the program would not expire before reauthorization legislation was passed.

However, he did not support the leading bill to expand SCHIP introduced in the House by the majority -- H.R. 976, the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007 -- which was ultimately vetoed by the White House.

The bill included provisions that would steer the program away from its stated purpose. H.R. 976 would have allowed states to establish their own eligibility standards, enabling states to expand coverage for higher income families up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level, an annual income of about \$82,600.

The original intent of SCHIP is to cover children from families who have annual incomes at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

While expanding the program to children whose families can afford private insurance, the legislation did nothing to boost enrollment among the children SCHIP was created to help. Nationwide, approximately 750,000 children currently qualify to receive SCHIP benefits under the existing SCHIP program but are not enrolled. More than 70,000 of those children live in Louisiana.

To cover the expense of the proposed expansion, Congressional leadership included a \$71 billion tax increase in the bill by raising the regressive tax on cigarettes by 61 cents a pack.

According to a study by the Heritage Foundation, to produce the revenue needed to fund the SCHIP expansion

through such a tax would require 22.4 million new smokers by 2017.

Another issue of concern with the legislation was a provision that would have enabled illegal immigrants to receive SCHIP benefits.

H.R. 976 eliminated the citizenship test for individuals to become eligible for SCHIP and only requires individuals to submit a Social Security number.

Since the Social Security Administration cannot determine the citizenship status of an individual by simply matching a name with a Social Security number, illegal immigrants using a stolen Social Security number could

have gained access to thousands of dollars in taxpayer-funded benefits.

Additionally, non-citizens who are eligible to work in the United States -- such as H-2A temporary agricultural workers, H-2B temporary professional workers and J-1 cultural exchange visitors -- are

eligible for Social Security numbers and their children could have received SCHIP benefits under H.R. 976.

Since the failure of H.R. 976, several other pieces of SCHIP reauthorization legislation have been introduced, and addressing this issue continues to be a daily focus of Congress. As Congress moves forward, Alexander will remain committed to keeping the program centered on its original purpose, and on educating 5th District families whose children qualify for SCHIP benefits but are not enrolled.

To learn more about SCHIP, including how to find out if your child is eligible to receive SCHIP benefits through LaCHIP, go online and visit the LaCHIP Web site at <http://www.dhh.state.la.us/offices/?ID=119> or call 1.877.252.2447.

...approximately 750,000 children currently qualify to receive SCHIP benefits under the existing SCHIP program but are not enrolled.

Five local veterans receive long-awaited service medals



Rep. Alexander presents Mack Dixon the medals he earned while serving in Vietnam.

This past August, five of the 5th District's war heroes received their long-overdue military medals during ceremonies held in Rep. Alexander's Monroe and Alexandria offices. Those honored were as follows:

• **Sidney Hart of Monroe**
Branch: U.S. Marine Corps

Service: Vietnam

Awards: Purple Heart, National Defense Service Medal, Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon and Combat Action Ribbon

• **Rayford Miller of Calhoun**
Branch: U.S. Army

Service: Vietnam

Awards: Purple Heart, Bronze Star, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, Marksman Rifle Badge and Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with Device

• **Charles Duke of West Monroe**
Branch: U.S. Army

Service: Vietnam

Awards: Purple Heart, Bronze Star, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Combat Infantry Badge

and Vietnam Campaign Ribbon with Device

• **The late Leon Gray**
Branch: U.S. Army

Service: World War II

Awards: Purple Heart, Good Conduct Medal, American Campaign Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal and Bronze Star Attachment, World War II Victory Medal and World War II Honorable Service Lapel Button

• **Mack Dixon of Alexandria**
Branch: U.S. Army

Service: Vietnam

Awards: National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal and Bronze Star Attachment, Armed Forces Reserve Medal and Hourglass Device Bronze, Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Ribbon with Device and Expert Badge and Auto Rifle Bar and Rifle Bar

Any veteran living in the 5th District who has not received an award he or she earned while serving in the U.S. military should contact staff in the congressional office in their area.

Petraeus sheds light on progress in Iraq

In light of the recent testimony by Gen. David Petraeus to Congress regarding the situation in Iraq, the United States should be encouraged that progress towards stabilization is being made.

Though some do not believe this year's troop surge had any positive effect, the testimony offered by Gen. Petraeus, commanding general of the Multi-National Force-Iraq, clearly states the contrary.

"As a bottom line up front, the military objectives of the surge are, in large measure, being met," Petraeus said during his testimony.

"The progress our forces have achieved with our Iraqi counterparts has, as I noted at the outset, been substantial," Petraeus went on to say.

Gen. Petraeus gave real examples of progress during his report – an overall decline in civilian deaths due to violence, fewer violent attacks, and bringing under control once unruly Anbar Province. Given the progress made in the past few months, Gen. Petraeus informed Congress that incremental troop reductions to pre-

surge levels could be safely achieved by July of 2008.

Few in the majority are satisfied with that assessment however, and continue to agitate for a complete withdrawal of our forces from Iraq by a set date. Gen. Petraeus, a highly decorated career military officer, not an "armchair general," warned Congress and the American people of the extreme danger of pursuing that line of thought.

"Our assessments underscore, in fact, the importance of recognizing that a premature drawdown of our forces would likely have devastating consequences," Petraeus said.

The consequences of American forces suddenly pulling out of Iraq now would no doubt be devastating indeed. The country would certainly descend into unimaginable sectarian violence. It would become a breeding ground and haven for terrorists who could use it as a base to launch attacks against the West with impunity.

Given the meddlesome actions of Iran in Iraq – which

Gen. Petraeus also spoke of in his report – Iraq could even become little more than a vassal state of an increasingly bellicose Iran.

All of these scenarios are absolutely unacceptable. It would lead to decades of worth of damage to an already fragile stability in the Middle East. It would empower and embolden terrorists and those who support and harbor them to launch more attacks upon the U.S. and our allies.

While we all look forward to a day when all of our brave young servicemen and women can return home, we must stay the course through to final victory before bringing them all home.

Wars are not fought and won on timetables – an immutable fact of history – and though this war may be unlike any other this nation has ever been involved in, the same rules apply. In the meantime, we must continue to offer our troops our support and prayers as they fight to make Iraq, Afghanistan, and the world a safer place for freedom and democracy.

Reform needed to combat growing crisis

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Illegal immigration brings with it a host of problems. First, it costs the American taxpayers a great deal of money. Illegal immigrants use our medical services, get state and federal assistance, and use our educational system for their children, all at the cost of U.S. citizens. Many of these illegal immigrants are criminals, and the cost to incarcerate them uses up even more taxpayer dollars.

A prime example of the huge costs illegal immigrants bring with them can be found in San Diego County, Calif.

A recent study commissioned by the county estimates that illegal immigrants cost San Diego County \$256 million in 2006. Of that, an estimated \$101 million was a direct cost to taxpayers, while the other \$155 million was an indirect cost in unpaid medical care. This is representative of just one county in California.

According to the Center for Immigration Studies, illegal immigrants cost the federal government alone a staggering \$26.3 billion in 2002. In the five years since, that number has only increased as more and more illegal immigrants have flooded across our borders.

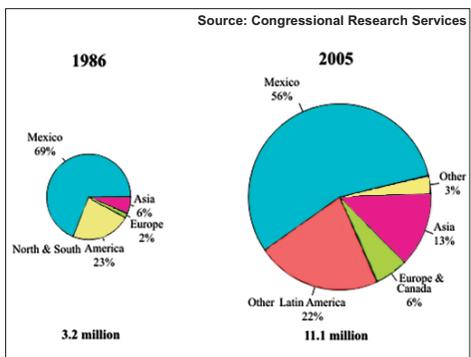
The cost to federal, state, and local governments, as well as the American taxpayer, is only one facet of the problem, and certainly not the most insidious. Illegal immigrants also pose a security threat to the United States. As we attempt to combat terrorism around the globe, it is unsettling that so many undocumented persons are able to illegally enter our country with such impunity.

Another disconcerting offshoot of illegal immigration is that it fosters a burgeoning illicit industry in forged document making. Such forged documents could easily find their way into the hands of terrorists as they attempt to avoid detection by law enforcement.

Tighter security at the border will not alleviate the problem completely. The common conception of illegal immigrants crossing the Rio Grande is but a piece of the overall problem. Included in the term "illegal immigrants" are those who have overstayed their tenure on a student or guest-worker visa, often for several years.

Many of these illegal immigrants are from countries where there is a great deal of anti-American sentiment. Combating illegal immigration properly requires not only tighter border security but a concerted effort to enforce immigration laws in the heartland.

However, simply enforcing the immigration laws we already have on the books has become problematic and highly politicized. Those who seek to enforce our country's immigration policy are often accused of unfairly targeting Hispanics. Enforcing immigration law is not meant to target



Illegal immigration problems go beyond the border with Mexico. This graph illustrates the fact that the percentage of illegal immigrants from Mexico has actually decreased in the past 20 years, while the percentage from other Latin American nations and Asia has climbed steadily.

and myriad others who came before – to enter the country legally, document your entry, learn our laws and our language, work towards citizenship and integrate into American society. The Statue of Liberty still proclaims to the world to send us "...your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free," and they are most welcome, as long as they follow the law.

Some, including the White House, have endorsed a plan that would give amnesty to millions of illegal immigrants, effectively making them legal residents. Such a plan is a slap in the face to all the hard-working men and women who immigrated legally to this country.

This plan has failed for the time being, though it's certain to resurface as the debate continues in Congress.

What we need, however, is not amnesty, which sends the wrong message to those who have flouted our nation's laws, but real immigration reform and meaningful enforcement of our immigration laws. That is why Rep. Alexander is proud to be a member of the Immigration Reform Caucus.

He has co-sponsored a number of bills in the 110th Congress addressing immigration reform. Amongst these are the No Social Security for Illegal Immigrants Act, the Nuclear Family Priority Act, the Birthright Citizenship Act, the Secure Borders FIRST Act, the CLEAR Act and others.

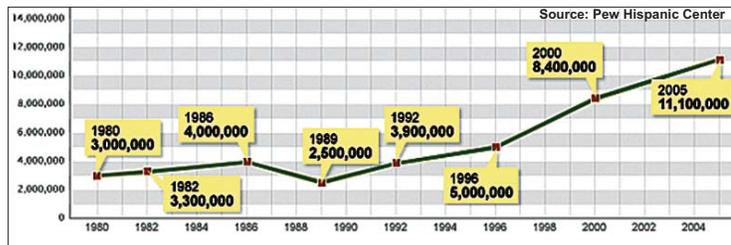
He has also co-sponsored legislation that would make English the official language of the United States and require that all government business be conducted only in English.

It is imperative that we put partisanship aside and act now to stem the tide of illegal immigrants into the country.

We must also begin taking the necessary steps to remove those already here. Rep. Alexander

will do his part in Congress to make that a reality.

Ultimately, however, it is the voice of American people, stating loud and clear that it is their will that the government act decisively to solve the illegal immigration problem that will encourage members from both sides of the aisle to come together and do the right thing for America.



The growth of the illegal immigrant population in the U.S., 1980-2005. The number of illegal immigrants in the country is now estimated to be growing by 500,000 a year.

any specific group, however, it's simply asking would-be immigrants – regardless of their ethnicity – to follow the same laws that all other immigrants who have come to this country in the past have followed.

The same thing is asked of those today that was asked of the Irish, Germans, Italians, Poles, Scandinavians, Greeks, Russians, Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Indians

Immigration reform and related bills co-sponsored by your congressman....

★ H.R. 736 – No Social Security for Illegal Immigrants Act

WHAT IT WOULD DO: *Prevent illegal aliens from earning Social Security credits for wages earned while in the country illegally.*

★ H.R. 769 – National Language Act

WHAT IT WOULD DO: *Make English the official language of the U.S. government. Provide that no person has a right, entitlement, or claim to have the government act, communicate, perform, or provide services or materials in any other language.*

★ H.R. 938 – Nuclear Family Priority Act

WHAT IT WOULD DO: *Restrict the availability of family-sponsored immigrant visas to the immediate family – spouses and children – of U.S. citizens and Legal Permanent Residents.*

★ H.R. 1314 – Photo Identification Security Act

WHAT IT WOULD DO: *Restrict the forms of individual identification that may be accepted by the federal government or by financial institutions to the following: A Social Security card accompanied by a photo identification card issued by the federal or a state government; a driver's license or identification card issued by a state that is in compliance with the REAL ID Act of 2005; a passport issued by the United States or a foreign government; a photo identification card issued by the Secretary of Homeland Security.*

★ H.R. 1940 – Birthright Citizenship Act

WHAT IT WOULD DO: *Provide that a person attains U.S. citizenship at birth only if one of the parents is a U.S. citizen or national; a lawful permanent resident alien whose residence is in the United States; or an alien in active service in the armed forces.*

★ H.R. 2954 – Secure Borders FIRST Act

WHAT IT WOULD DO: *Provide more resources to law enforcement to combat illegal immigration both at the border and inland. Create an employment eligibility and identity verification system. Provide for expedited removal of illegal aliens on criminal or security grounds. Stiffen penalties for employers who knowingly employ illegal aliens.*

★ H.R. 3494 – CLEAR (Clear Law Enforcement for Criminal Alien Removal) Act

WHAT IT WOULD DO: *Provide for enhanced federal, state, and local assistance in the enforcement of the immigration laws.*

Visit the Immigration Reform Caucus at:
www.house.gov/bilbray/lrc

Prescription drugs becoming more available, affordable



Photo courtesy of Bastrop Daily Enterprise

Liz Faulk, North Delta Region coordinator for Senior Rx, assists a resident signing up for Louisiana's state prescription drug program. Federal-sponsored prescription drug coverage is available through Medicare Part D.

No one should have to go without prescription drugs because they cannot afford them, and thanks to federal and state prescription drug programs, they don't have to.

Thanks to these programs, more Louisianians have easy access to prescription drug coverage than ever before.

At the federal level, millions of American seniors have attained affordable prescription drug coverage under Medicare Part D, which Rep. Alexander supported. Medicare Part D is a voluntary prescription drug coverage program where seniors can purchase a prescription drug plan from participating private companies at a reduced cost.

Federal subsidies cover the bulk of the expense and plans are available in Louisiana for as little as \$17 per month. The limit of annual coverage is \$2,250, though coverage resumes once the plan holder's out-of-pocket expenses exceeds \$3,600. Some Part D plans do continue to offer coverage on certain medications during this "gap."

At the state level, the Senior Rx program is available to

further assist those who need help getting the prescription drugs they need. The program links patients to pharmaceutical companies to provide them with their medications at a greatly reduced cost. The Senior Rx program is open not only to seniors, but to all Louisianians 21 years of age and older who have a physical disability and have no prescription drug coverage. Those with Medicare Part D programs are also eligible to enroll in Senior Rx if they're within the "gap."

For those just becoming eligible for Medicare, the annual open enrollment period for Part D is from November 15-December 31. For more information, visit the Medicare Web site at www.medicare.gov, or call the Louisiana Medicare help line at 1.800.259.5301.

For more information on Senior Rx and to find the contact information for the program coordinator in your area to assist you with enrollment, visit www.louisianaseniorr.org.

Ethanol holds promise for our energy future Effort to save levee trees ongoing

In case you didn't notice, there was a lot more corn harvested in the 5th District this year. Almost everywhere you look, stalks of recently harvested corn stretch out to the horizon. Moreover, it's likely to stay that way for the foreseeable future.

The reason for corn's sudden prominence in the Deep South – along with much of the rest of the country – is simple. It is the promise of ethanol.

Ethanol production is a growing industry in the United States, as evidenced by the ever-increasing acres of corn – the primary ingredient from which ethanol is brewed. Along with the burgeoning corn crop, more and more ethanol plants are going up around the country. One is currently under construction in the 5th District at Lake Providence. The ethanol boom appears to be here to stay. In fact, we're just witnessing the beginning.

The motivation behind ethanol's growing popularity is easy to understand. As crude oil prices rise ever higher, America is looking for cheaper alternative fuels to feed its vehicles and fire its industry. Furthermore, there is increasing determination to find a way to end America's dependence on foreign oil. Finally, ethanol and other bio-fuels hold the promise of drastically reducing the amount of greenhouse gases our automobiles and power plants belch into the atmosphere. Ethanol's appeal is therefore threefold: It could lead to lower fuel prices, make America energy independent and be better for the environment.

As noted, however, we are at the beginning of this potential energy revolution. The technology to make ethanol truly cost and energy effective is still developing. And ethanol made from corn – and sugarcane, another important Louisiana crop -- is only the tip of the iceberg.

In addition to corn-based ethanol, research is ongoing into the production of ethanol from other sources. For instance, right now only the corn kernels are used in ethanol production, but researchers are developing ways to extract the sugars from the whole plant – stalks, husks and all – to make ethanol. As this technology develops, it will be-

come possible to make ethanol from a variety of sources. Experiments are being conducted using switchgrass, rice husks, and even wood chips to make ethanol.

Another unlikely source of ethanol production is simple green algae. The potential for algae-produced bio-fuel is enormous, as algae are easy to grow and could be incredibly energy and cost efficient. Furthermore, some researchers are growing their biofuel-producing algae at power plants, using the plant's emissions to grow huge mats of algae. The algae scrub pollutants from the exhaust, doubling its effectiveness as a way of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

These are just some tantalizing examples of what the future of energy production may hold. That is why Congress has gone to great lengths to provide incentives to companies that research and produce ethanol and other biofuels. Rep. Alexander realizes the great potential and benefit of these alternative fuel sources and has lent his name as a co-sponsor to legislation that promotes the development of alternative fuels and vehicles that run on them.

Ultimately, the goal of investing in ethanol and biofuels is an America free of dependence on foreign oil, cheaper fuel at the pump and cleaner air in the atmosphere. While we may not be there yet, the future of American energy production appears to be bright indeed.



Photo courtesy of Bastrop Daily Enterprise

Bonita, La. farmer Jason Stuttts heads back out into the field for another load of corn. The boom in ethanol production led the Stuttts family to concentrate on growing corn. Many other farmers in Louisiana have done the same as corn prices continue to rise.

Effort to save levee trees ongoing

The stately oak trees that line the levees of the Ouachita River aren't doomed yet.

The much-publicized and criticized plan by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to remove all trees, shrubs, and structures from within 15 feet of the toe of all levees is still under review. The Corps will issue final guidance next spring after completion of its public and engineering reviews.

The planned rule change – which the Corps made in response to the levee failures following Hurricane Katrina – has generated a great deal of controversy and public outcry. The general concern and consensus amongst many people is that the plan would be devastating to the Ouachita's – and other river systems in the 5th District -- natural, scenic beauty. No tree or structure within 15 feet of the levee would be left standing under the plan, which would affect not only public spaces but private landowners and homeowners as well, most of whom cherish the trees and shrubs sheltering their yards.



Besides the aesthetic concerns, there are the concerns about cost. There are over 200 miles of levees along the Ouachita alone. The cost to remove all trees and structures throughout this stretch would be enormous, and the local Tensas Basin Levee District would be left to pay the bill.

The people of the 5th District are not alone in their opposition to this plan, however. Rep. Alexander has voiced his concerns to the Corps and asked them to re-view the policy. He strongly believes that removing all structures and vegetation within 15 feet of the levee toe would be burdensome for the 5th District's residents and harmful to the unique beauty of our communities.

Furthermore, the uproar is not just coming from Louisiana residents, but also from those of other states whose levees would be similarly impacted.

Hopefully, the Corps will take the public sentiment against this plan to heart and formulate a less disruptive and controversial plan to strengthen our levee system.

Hunting safety tips....



Fall is here, and with the cooler weather and shorter days comes one of many Louisianians' favorite seasons -- hunting season. Before heading into the woods to bag your buck or into the backwaters in search of greenheads, make sure you're fully prepared for any situation that may arise and always remember to use caution when shooting to protect yourself and others.

- ◆ Leave your gun unloaded while driving or traveling on your ATV.
- ◆ Keep your gun safety on at all times until you're ready to take the shot.
- ◆ Never shoot until you've positively identified your target.
- ◆ When in the woods, wear the proper amount of orange blaze clothing as required by law.
- ◆ Carry matches or a lighter in a waterproof container.
- ◆ Carry a map and compass -- or a GPS unit -- especially when heading into an unfamiliar area.
- ◆ Carry enough food and water to sustain you in the event you become lost or stranded.
- ◆ Pack a small first-aid kit.
- ◆ Never strike off into the woods alone without telling someone where you're going and giving them a general time when you expect to return.
- ◆ Thoroughly check your ATV, boat or motor to make sure they're in good working order and have plenty of fuel the day before your hunt.
- ◆ Never go hunting while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

And one more thing.....

While not a safety tip, this is a tip all hunters should follow: **If you pack it in, pack it out.** Don't leave your litter in the woods or on the bayous. Let's do our part to protect the environment and ensure that the Sportsman's Paradise remains just that for future generations.

**Good luck to you this season.
Have a safe and successful hunt.**

Local economy, projects developing

Historically, agriculture has always been a major part of Louisiana's culture and industry, and today it continues to drive the state's economy, contributing \$10 billion each year, according to the LSU AgCenter. Yet as America moves toward a more global economy and as business grows more competitive on both the local and national levels, Louisiana must evolve as well.

In addition to exploring new markets for farmers, communities are faced with the challenge of better utilizing their resources to create more business-friendly environments in order to encourage companies to invest. This year, Rep. Alexander has worked toward these goals in many ways.

This May, he was tapped to join five other members of the House Appropriations Committee Agriculture Subcommittee on a trip to Cuba to explore trade opportunities for America's farmers -- particularly the potential for increased rice sales, which could mean big things for North Louisiana's rice farmers. According to the USA Rice Federation, the market size for U.S. rice could reach 800,000 metric tons -- 14 times the current export. Louisiana's share could jump to as much as 480,000 metric tons.

In September, Alexander joined another congressional delegation trip led by U.S. Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez to Panama, Peru and Columbia to discuss pending trade agreements with the United States and to meet with government, business, labor and civil society officials on the role these agreements play in promoting positive social change and economic growth and opportunity. In December 2005 Sec. Gutierrez toured the Monroe/West Monroe Port project, and Gutierrez expressed interest in the potential for economic growth through increased trade in the 5th Congressional District of Louisiana.

In a step toward realizing this potential, Alexander secured a \$500,000 earmark in the House Appropriations Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee appropriations bill for the Greater Port of Ouachita and Intermodal Facility for the design, construction and operation of a new intermodal container-handling facility on the Ouachita River.

As a member of this key committee, Alexander worked to secure several other earmarks that will strengthen communities and therefore the economy in ways such as improving local infrastructure and strengthening education and health care. Here is a sampling of some of the earmarks he secured.

House Appropriations Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee appropriations bill (T-HUD)

- Monroe Regional Airport: New Terminal, \$400,000
- Lincoln Parish I-20 Transportation Corridor Program,



Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez and members of the U.S. delegation met with Colombian President Alvaro Uribe on Sept. 15 to discuss the pending trade agreement and the opportunities it will provide both countries. Pictured (l. to r.) are: Colombian Trade Minister Plata, Rep. Meeks of New York, Rep. Hinojosa of Texas, President Uribe, Rep. Alexander, Secretary Gutierrez, Sen. Bennett of Utah, Rep. Crowley of New York, and Rep. Dreier of California.

\$500,000

- Alexandria Central Economic Development District: Alexandria Riverfront Project, \$300,000

House Appropriations Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Subcommittee appropriations bill (Labor-HHS)

- University of Louisiana at Monroe's College of Pharmacy, \$300,000
- Louisiana Tech University's IDEA Place and SciTech Classroom, \$250,000
- Louisiana Delta Community College, \$200,000
- Northeast Louisiana Family Literacy Consortium, \$200,000
- Rapides Parish Career Solutions Center, \$200,000
- Point Coupee Better Access Community Health, \$100,000

House Appropriations Agriculture Subcommittee appropriations bill

- Union-Lincoln Regional Water Supply Initiative, \$123,750
- Louisiana Rural Development Center (Louisiana Tech University), \$150,000
- Delta Regional Authority, \$3,000,000

These projects await final approval in the joint House-Senate Conference report. For project descriptions as well as to see all earmarks secured in other appropriations bills this session, visit www.house.gov/alexander and click on Press Releases.



Rep. Alexander sits down to discuss issues facing Congress with Bernie Deshotel at the Evangeline Parish Police Jury dinner in Ville Platte in August.

Keeping in touch...

During the August recess, Rep. Alexander was back home in the 5th District attending town hall meetings and addressing civic groups.

He realizes the importance of meeting with the people of the district whenever possible to listen to their concerns and answer their questions on a face-to-face basis.

Organizations may request meetings with Alexander by contacting staff in his Washington office at (202) 225-8490.

Three students honored in art competition

For high school art students across the country eager to show off their creative work to the masses, the Congressional Art Competition has, for over 25 years, been an avenue to do just that.

Through the annual competition, An Artistic Discovery, students in every congressional district in every state submit their works for judging by a panel of art teachers from within their districts.

The winning pieces for each district are displayed in the Cannon Tunnel of the United States Capitol and are viewed daily by thousands walking through this tunnel on their way to our nation's Capitol building.

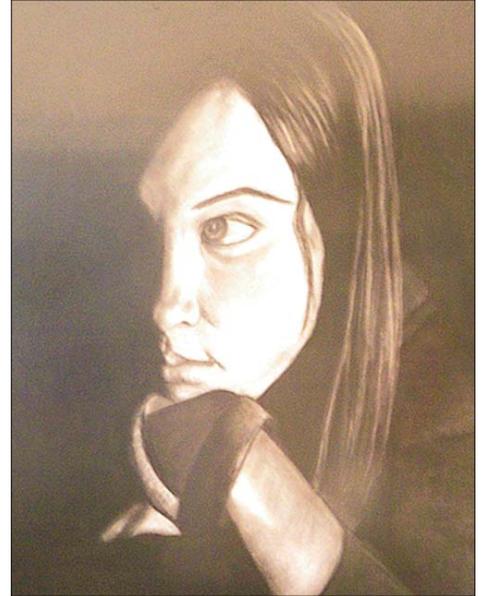
"This competition is a great opportunity for young artists to put their creativity and talent on display for people from all over the country to see," Rep. Alexander said. "I enjoy being part of a contest that encourages young students to develop their artistic talents."

The 2007 first-place winner of the 5th Congressional District of Louisiana's contest is Catherine Jeansonne of Monroe. Her artwork, titled " $\sqrt{-1} = i$," is currently on display in the Cannon Tunnel.

Other 5th District winners were Hannah Roberts of Monroe, who placed second with "Broken Bones," and Leah Mazur of Sterlington, who placed third with "Leah."

Their works are displayed in the D.C. office, where visitors from the district and elsewhere see their work every day. The paintings will remain up until next year's winners are decided in April of 2008.

Information regarding entry and rules is distributed to art teachers throughout the district as it becomes available. To obtain additional information on the competition, please contact the Alexandria (318.445.0818) or Monroe (318.322.3500) office.



Winners from the 5th District in this year's Congressional Art Competition are:

Top left: First Place, " $\sqrt{-1} = i$," by Catherine Jeansonne of Monroe. Jeansonne graduated from Neville High School this past May.

Bottom Left: Second Place, "Broken Bones," by Hannah Roberts of Monroe. Roberts also graduated from Neville High School.

Above: Third Place, "Leah," by Leah Mazur of Sterlington. Mazur is a junior at Sterlington High School.

Fifth District student snapshots



Above: Members of Tioga High School's Junior ROTC unfurl the new American flag presented to the Rapides Parish Coliseum by Rep. Alexander. The flag previously flew over the U.S. Capitol building.

Top left: Brian Johnson, Nathaniel Ryan, and Ladd Sander-son, all of Monroe, visited the congressman to discuss the legislative process during a People to People Leadership Forum in Washington, D.C. this past March.

Bottom left: Alexander presents a plaque to Oak Hill High School Principal Emily Weatherford and Oak Hill's National Honor Society students for the community service they displayed in a local food drive.

Academy nominees

Being appointed to a United States service academy is one of the most prestigious accomplishments a college-bound student can achieve, and this spring two young men from the 5th District received this honor.

Both students were nominated by Rep. Alexander. Students interested in attending the U.S. Military Academy, the U.S. Naval Academy or the U.S. Air Force Academy must be nominated by their congressman to be accepted.

Peter Horban, a graduate of the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts in Natchitoches, accepted an offer of appointment to the U.S. Air Force Academy. Horban is the son of Dr. Blaise Horban and Lynne Pompetti, both former residents of Alexandria.

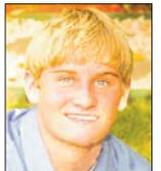
Zach Wilson, a graduate of Ouachita Christian School in Monroe, accepted an offer of appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy. Wilson is the son of William Gordon Jr. and Mary Wilson of Monroe.

Alexander said their appointments are a credit to their accomplishments in their schools and communities.

"It was an honor to nominate these two fine young men, and I am certain the experiences they will have in the next few years will prepare them for successful futures," he said.



Horban



Wilson