

The Renzi Report

VOL. 3 ISSUE 3

MAY 2005

Your Direct Link to the News and Events from Our Nation's Capital and Rural Arizona

Dear Fellow Arizonan:

As the son of an Army General, I hold the men and women who serve our country in the highest regard. Their sacrifice and commitment has earned them the respect of a grateful nation. Memorial Day is perhaps one of the most important holidays in America. It celebrates the sacrifices made by our courageous men and women who have fallen in defense of our nation's liberty. This day marks the high price of freedom, because without these brave Americans, no other holidays would be possible.

Although Memorial Day comes only once a year, we must make sure that they know how grateful we are everyday. Whether serving in World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, the War on Terror or other conflicts, the sacrifices of our veterans are appreciated, and will never be forgotten.

As always, feel free to tell your family members, friends and neighbors about the Renzi Report. You can sign up to receive this email and find additional information about developments in Congress at my website. Just click on the following link: <http://www.house.gov/renzi>.

If you have any questions or comments about this e-newsletter or anything else, please e-mail me at rick.renzi@mail.house.gov and I will get back to you as quickly as possible. I hope you find this Renzi Report informative. Thank you and may God bless America.



Congressman Rick Renzi

If you no longer want to receive this newsletter, please send an email to rick.renzi@mail.house.gov and type UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject field.



Congressman Rick Renzi receives an award from the American Legion, as an "Unsung Hero for America's Veterans."

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Veterans Legislative Update

Renzi Measure to Help Disabled Vets Passed by House – Approved by President Bush

Congressman Rick Renzi said he was extremely pleased to see the House and Senate pass legislation similar to his to help injured veterans. Renzi's bill, called the Wounded Warrior Act (H.R.1618), was introduced recently and would establish a disability insurance benefit for members of the Armed Forces who suffer certain specified severe disabilities. The disability payment is intended to assist members of our armed forces and their families during the injured service member's hospitalization and rehabilitation period as well as their transition to full employment. President George W. Bush signed the measure into law earlier this month.

BY THE NUMBERS:

\$400K – Increase in Death Benefits approved by Congress from **\$250K**

\$100K – Increase in the onetime death gratuity for combat related fatalities from **\$12K**

\$1.6 billion – The budget increase this year for **Veterans Medical Expenses** is the highest funding level in history.

Congressman Renzi Will Be Speaking on Veterans Issues and Memorial Day at the Following Events

MAY 29, 2005 -

1PM – Navajo Nation Memorial Day event – Purple Heart Presentation – Window Rock, AZ

MAY 30, 2005 -

9AM – Memorial Day Event – Cibecue Cemetery

11AM – Show Low Veterans Event - Cemetery

5PM – San Carlos Apache Memorial Day Event – San Carlos Cemetery – Tribal Headquarters

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Native American Legislative Update

Renzi Announces New Funds for Indian Health Service Clinics



Congressman Rick Renzi said he was pleased to see more than \$10 million in federal funds for two new Indian Health Service clinics in Arizona's First District approved by the House of Representatives. The new funds will be used to construct new health clinics for the Navajo Nation in Kayenta, which will be receiving almost \$4 million and the Apache in San Carlos, which will be receiving more than \$6 million.

Access to quality healthcare is incredibly important to our communities in rural Arizona. This money represents an important first step in the planning, design and future construction for outpatient clinics in San Carlos and Kayenta. Once completed, the new clinics will provide access to quality healthcare in communities which have historically been underserved.

New Loan Will Build Navajo Nation Dental Clinic

Congressman Rick Renzi recently announced a new \$1.2 million low interest loan which will be provided by the USDA Office of Rural Development to build a new dental clinic for the Navajo Nation. The new dental clinic will be located in the heart of the Navajo Nation, in the St. Michaels area. It will be a free standing facility offering dental and orthodontic services for members of the Navajo Nation and its surrounding communities and is expected to be completed in October of 2005.

The loan was awarded to Nizhoni Smiles, Inc., a non-profit medical group offering dental services on the Navajo reservation since 1979. The new clinic will not only work in conjunction with the Indian Health Services (IHS) clinics, but will also offer alternative treatment and care not available in the past. Previously, residents seeking dental care were forced to travel to larger cities like Gallup to receive dental care, or wait months for an appointment with a visiting healthcare professional.

– NEW WEBSITE DESIGN –

We have updated and redesigned our website to make it easier to use. Please log on and let us know what you think. www.house.gov/renzi

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Congressional Mailbag

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*Q - Congressman Renzi, fire season is upon us, and I am wondering what Congress is doing to help protect our communities against wildfires?
- Prescott, AZ*

A - Maintaining the health of our forests is essential for Arizona, especially because our state has experienced first hand effects of decades of forest mismanagement. The wildfire season can be a dangerous and stressful time for residents of rural areas, but a proactive and forward thinking forest management approach can not only safeguard our communities, it can provide an important economic boost to our rural areas.

Improving the health of our forests is a top priority for me. After coming to Congress, one of the first bills I cosponsored was an important piece of legislation to help our local communities and land managers implement wildfire protections. The Healthy Forests Restoration Act streamlines procedures to speed up the implementation of scientifically proven management techniques, including thinning and prescribed burning on national forests and Bureau of Land Management lands. The possibility of another devastating fire season reminds us that we must take active steps to manage our forests in rural Arizona and reduce the risk of fire, environmental devastation, and tragic loss of homes and human life. It was good news for our communities when President George W. Bush signed this significant piece of forest management legislation into law in December of 2003.

Just last week, the House approved more than \$76 million for the State Fire Assistance program as part of the \$26.2 billion Interior Appropriations bill. The new funds represent an increase over last year, and \$26 million more than the President's budget request.

A portion of the funds will be used to assist northern Arizona with community wildfire protection projects. The State Fire Assistance program is incredibly important to western states like Arizona, and this increase in funding will go a long way in protecting our communities and our natural resources.

It is important to remember that protecting and managing our forests is a multi-tiered strategy. It is essential to use scientifically proven management techniques, including thinning and prescribed burning on national forests and Bureau of Land Management lands. Forest thinning by timber companies is an important part of the solution, because it removes not only potential fuel sources, but provides a vital economic boost to our local economies and small businesses. These private projects in our forests mean more jobs for rural Arizonans. This participation from the private sector can help infuse our local economies and assist with the return of a sustainable and ecologically sensitive timber industry. The preservation of our natural resources can go hand in hand with economic prosperity and security from the threat of catastrophic wildfire.

I will continue to work with my colleagues in Congress and with our local communities and land managers to further bolster our firefighting efforts in the years to come. By coming together and working together, we will be succeeding together to safeguard our rural areas against the threat of wildfire.

Sincerely

Rick Renzi
United States Congressman
First District of Arizona