

wage unconventional warfare, conduct high risk helicopter operations, or prosecute civil military and influence operations.

For those in today's USASOC, the pace is fast, the challenges great, but morale and job satisfaction have seldom been greater. The command's motto, "Without Equal", captures the spirit of its personnel and their commitment to maintaining the world's finest ground special operations force.

The command's missions, however, have not come without a sizable cost in lives lost. In the 8 years since the start of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, 244 of USASOC's personnel have made the ultimate sacrifice. Their names are cast in bronze on a wall in USASOC's Memorial Plaza at Fort Bragg, NC.

In closing, the performance and contributions of Army Special Operations Forces in the Central Command theater of operations and around the world have been nothing short of magnificent. Whether in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Philippines, Trans-Sahara Africa or wherever friends and partners find themselves challenged by the forces of disintegration, oppression and extremism, Army Special Operators from across the Command's formations are unquestionably among America's most relevant answer to the threats our Nation faces.

TRIBUTE TO JIM PITCOCK

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, today I rise to honor the career of Jim Pitcock, a valuable staff member and more importantly a valuable part of the Arkansas community. Jim has been faithful and selfless in his service to the State of Arkansas, and his contributions will be sorely missed by me, my staff, and the many Arkansans who have had the great fortune of working with this wonderful public servant.

Jim has served on my staff from the very first day of my tenure as a Member of the U.S. Senate. His knowledge of the State of Arkansas and government has guided some of my most important decisions and for that I will be forever grateful. His wise, steady council is always held in high esteem. Jim has served several roles on my staff. His most recent role as senior caseworker has benefitted the people of Arkansas by assisting individuals, businesses and organizations that are experiencing difficulties with Federal agencies. Jim's leadership has set an expectation of excellence in constituent services.

Prior his work in the U.S. Senate, Jim was already a legend in Arkansas. He served as news director at Channel 7 in Little Rock for more than 30 years. During this time, Jim established an unprecedented system of archiving news coverage for historical purposes. Jim has witnessed and archived news from Governors Faubus to Huckabee and Presidents Johnson to Clinton. He also provided critical coverage of

major events in our State, such as the Damascus missile explosion, the Cuban refugee crisis and the great Arkansas Texas shootout football game of 1969. Following his departure from television, I was privileged to have Jim join my staff in the Arkansas attorney general's office in 2001 serving as the public information officer.

After so many years of faithful service to the people of Arkansas, Jim Pitcock has made a decision to retire from the Senate and his presence will be missed. He will continue to be a friend and adviser to me and I wish him all the best of luck as he begins this new chapter in his life.

Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the outstanding career and service of Jim Pitcock to the U.S. Senate and the State of Arkansas.

THREE SISTERS SCENIC BIKEWAY

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, too many of our communities are hemorrhaging jobs. That is especially true in rural areas, where industries have suffered and companies have had to let lots of people go. In Oregon, for example, changes in forest policy have hit rural communities particularly hard in recent years. I am constantly working to find solutions that will help those communities not just survive but thrive.

It is indisputable that many rural communities and small towns in Oregon contain some of the most beautiful scenery in America. When I look at their future, I see that the scenic beauty and solitude of beautiful places like Sisters, OR, which sits in the shadow of the Cascade Mountains, can be a big engine to drive the economy. Investments in amenities like parks and scenic bikeways can be valuable for communities because they aren't fleeting. They build infrastructure that lasts for generations. The beauty of nature, especially out in the countryside, attracts tourists—particularly bicyclists.

The League of American Bicyclists estimates that biking contributes \$133 billion per year to our national economy, provides 1.1 million jobs, and generates \$17.7 billion in Federal, State, and local taxes. They estimate that another \$46.9 billion is spent on meals, transportation, lodging, gifts, and entertainment during bike trips and tours.

Savvy entrepreneurs in Oregon have come together to capitalize on the benefits that being a destination for bicyclists can bring to a community. Cycle Oregon—called "the best bike ride in America"—attracted 2,200 people from 44 States and 11 foreign countries to its 2008 ride, which took hardy bicyclists through some of Oregon's most beautiful sites. But it is not just Oregon entrepreneurs who have figured this out. It is a nationwide phenomenon. Bloomington, Indiana's "Hilly 100 ride," for example, draws

5,000 riders and over \$1 million in lodging and food sales. And in Iowa, the week-long Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa has become so popular that last year, they had to turn people away after more than 9,000 applied to cycle across the State.

It is often through outdoor events like bike races that you will find a CEO or company leader visiting Central Oregon on a vacation and having the brainstorm that it would make a great place to locate a new enterprise. Many high-tech companies, for example, are locating in places with unique, scenic beauty to set them apart from their competition in the big cities and to give them an added bonus to attract the talent they need to succeed.

I thought there must be a way to tap the full recreation potential of central Oregon and create a model that could be replicated in other parts of the country. So, 2 years ago I asked recreation leaders in Deschutes County to look at how recreation could add value to its recreation assets, creating the strongest possible engine for economic development.

Since then, the Sisters area has decided that much of its economy is tied to broadening the set of recreation experiences they can offer to visitors. They have developed many miles of new, spectacular mountain bike trails in the cascade foothills of Peterson Ridge as part of that effort. They see the development of a better cycling route to Bend as a vital addition to the menu of recreation opportunities in the area.

Community and business leaders from across Deschutes County have worked for the past two years on ideas like those developed in Sisters. They came together recently to formally launch an effort to create the Three Sisters Scenic Bikeway—a scenic bike route connecting each of the cities in that county, via cycling-friendly routes that take you past spectacular scenery.

Government officials are pitching in too. The Oregon Department of Transportation and the U.S. Forest Service are working together to implement the committee's vision of a paved bike path connecting Bend to Sunriver. The Forest Service is about halfway through their decision making process on a paved path from Sunriver out to Lava Lands Visitors Center, and ODOT is pursuing a variety of funding options to get the work done while crews are still working on the major reconstruction of Highway 97 nearby.

As we rebuild our country's infrastructure and seek new ways to create jobs, we would do well to follow the lesson of Deschutes County and The Three Sisters Scenic Bikeway. It was an idea that was first proposed by concerned members of the community. It answers local needs and they have a lot of confidence it will work. And as representatives of those communities, my colleagues and I have the ability to help water the seeds of those ideas when government can help out.