

encouraging the formation of NMVC companies in each of the ten geographic regions of the SBA.

Many of my constituents have fallen on hard times and are in need of help. A large portion of my district is in the midst of an economic crisis at this moment. In 2002, the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that 59 percent of working age African American males in Milwaukee were either unemployed or out of the workforce. In the past five years, Milwaukee has lost 33,000 manufacturing jobs, an industry that was once the lifeblood of the local economy. And, according to a study conducted by the University of Kansas, Milwaukee ranks 49th out of the 50 largest U.S. cities in terms of per capita venture capital dollars.

Small businesses create nearly 75 percent of all new jobs and account for 99 percent of all employers. It is not a stretch to conclude that increased investment in small businesses leads to the creation of new jobs and sparks much needed economic development in areas that have experienced better days. And given the high levels of unemployment that exist in many distressed urban and rural communities throughout the country, the New Markets Venture Capital program would provide a crucial source of investment capital to small firms and help create new jobs.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this very important bipartisan bill.

INTRODUCTION OF THE BLUNT RESERVOIR AND PIERRE CANAL LAND CONVEYANCE ACT OF 2005

HON. STEPHANIE HERSETH

OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 10, 2005

Ms. HERSETH. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing the Blunt Reservoir and Pierre Canal Land Conveyance Act of 2005.

The origins of the bill stretch back to The Flood Control Act of 1944 which authorized a 190,000 acre irrigation project surrounding the Oahe dam and reservoir. As part of this project, the Bureau of Reclamation acquired approximately 19,000 acres of land in two South Dakota counties before organized opposition halted the project in 1977. Since then, the Bureau of Reclamation has retained ownership of the land and, even today, the original landowners continue to lease the land from the department.

Recognizing that the project will not be restarted, the State of South Dakota initiated talks to resolve the ownership situation. Working with the South Dakota Department of Game Fish and Parks, local stakeholders, the Bureau of Reclamation, and others, a general consensus emerged that the best way to deal with the associated economic, tax base, wildlife mitigation, and public access concerns would be to allow the original landowners to buy back the land. Years of negotiations and meetings led to the bill I am introducing today.

Under this bill, former Blunt Reservoir and Pierre Canal landowners would be allowed to repurchase their former lands, on which they currently hold preferential leases, from the Bureau of Reclamation. The bill also will transfer non-preferentially-leased lands and unleased lands to the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks, GFP, as part of its

broader plan to restore wildlife habitat that was lost due to the construction of the Missouri River dams.

The proposals in this legislation were included in an identical bill that passed the Senate by unanimous consent last year. This legislation is an important opportunity to resolve a land ownership issue left open for over 3 decades. I urge my colleagues in the House to give this bill their swift consideration.

TRIBUTE TO ERNEST C. FORD, AN AMERICAN VETERAN

HON. DANIEL E. LUNGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 10, 2005

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, Veterans Day is a special day we set aside to honor all of our brave service men and women both past and present. It is a day to remember, a day to honor and a day to reflect upon our fellow citizens who, risking their lives, were willing to make the ultimate sacrifice. It is a day to honor those we know and those we have never met.

It is my privilege to honor one of our veterans in the Third Congressional District of California, Ernest C. Ford. Mr. Ford's story was brought to my attention some months ago. Like many of my fellow colleagues in Congress, we represent our constituents and are honored to have veterans among them. It is their story that humanizes the importance of Veterans Day.

In May of 1927, Charles Lindbergh took off from Roosevelt Field, Long Island, New York and flew into aviation history and into the imagination of a 5½ year old boy, "Ernie" Ford. With the onset of World War II, the young farm boy from Dodge City, Kansas left his family and friends to join a cause larger than himself.

Fifteen years later to the day of Lindbergh's faithful flight, Staff Sergeant Ernest C. Ford graduated from advanced flying school at Luke Field in Phoenix, Arizona. Like many, in what has been referred to as the greatest generation, he served with honor and distinction to preserve Liberty and Freedom throughout the world. Flying over 6,500 hours and 364 combat missions, the most of any pilot in the USAAF during World War II, he showed his dedication to duty, honor and country.

On February 6, 1943, Staff Sergeant Ernie Ford, a transport pilot, is credited with saving three C-47 planes, their crews, and 87 Australian infantry during the battle of Wau in New Guinea, Australia. While the battle raged around him, Mr. Ford proceeded to takeoff on a bombed out airstrip while under enemy fire. Witnessing his lead plane shot down on ascent, he decided to keep his plane low for maximum speed. With the plane only 10 to 15 feet off the ground, Ernie Ford escaped the fate of his comrades before him and showed the remaining C-47's a way to escape the battle.

For his exceptional service, he won a battlefield commission and was promoted to the rank of 2nd lieutenant. At the end of the war in the Pacific, Mr. Ford earned 6 Distinguished Flying Crosses, one garnering a V for valor, 2 Air Medals, and was recommended for our nation's third highest military honor, the Silver

Star for his actions at Wau. Along with personal recognition, his squadron received three Presidential Unit Citations and two Battle Stars. Following World War II, he helped stem the tide of communism during the Korean Conflict by flying 21 combat missions. After 23 years of service, Mr. Ford eventually retired with the rank of Major with over 15 decorations.

The gratitude that all Americans owe to Mr. Ford cannot be expressed in mere words alone.

I will tell you everyday that I go to work; I am reminded of our veterans and the sacrifices they made by the sight of the many beautiful memorials erected in their memory. These memorials represent the dogged determination of our veterans and are a reminder of the heartfelt gratitude all Americans owe them for their service.

As President Ronald Reagan on the 40th anniversary of D-Day said, "We will always remember. We will always be proud. We will always be prepared, so we may always be free."

I thank you, Mr. Ford, and all our honored American Veterans for your service to our country.

TRIBUTE TO THE MARCH-WESTIN COMPANY AND THE ST. JAMES CATHOLIC CHURCH

HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 10, 2005

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the March-Westin Company of Morgantown, West Virginia and the St. James Catholic Church for their exceptional achievement in the field of occupational safety and health.

Incorporated in 1984, the March-Westin Company is a full-service engineering and general contracting firm located in Morgantown, WV. March-Westin has worked on over 600 projects throughout West Virginia, establishing themselves as one of the best firms in all of West Virginia. After a rigorous review by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, OSHA, March-Westin has been awarded the agency's approval as a Star participant in their Voluntary Protection Program, VPP. Since 1982, this demanding award has been given to fewer than 1,000 worksites across the Nation and I am pleased to recognize March-Westin and the St. James Catholic Church for their work in receiving this award. In fact, this exemplary small construction company had no employee injuries or illnesses during the qualifying period for the program. VPP sites serve as a model for what can be accomplished through a commitment to workplace safety, as these sites achieve a level of worker protection that goes far beyond compliance with already strict government regulations.

In Charles Town, WV, the March-Westin Company is constructing a 55,000 square foot, old style church which includes a parish hall, library, classrooms, a chapel, bell tower, and a kitchen. This \$10 million project will serve not only as a model for workplace safety but also as a wonderful place for worship and a welcome addition to the eastern panhandle of West Virginia.