

manner, but also increasing its capacity to produce electricity, these workers are doing their part to meet Missouri's—and our Nation's—growing energy needs.

I offer my personal thanks and congratulations for a job well done to all of the dedicated employees and the temporary workers who, as a result of exceptional preparation, teamwork, and execution, successfully completed the most complex outage at Callaway Nuclear Plant.

I congratulate the AmerenUE workers and their partners on their achievement. They have set a new standard of excellence in safety and performance and have helped advance the future of the nuclear power industry as a whole.

MISSILE DEFENSE AGENCY'S RECENT TESTING SUCCESSES

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, I rise to comment on an event that may have understandably escaped the attention of my colleagues because our plate is full and the schedule is tight. I want to underscore the importance of what occurred on Tuesday night, December 13, shortly after 10 p.m. Washington time. It signaled a month of great achievement in our Nation's Missile Defense Program.

While many of us were turning on the late news that night, an operationally configured, ground-based interceptor missile, of the kind now emplaced in both Alaska and California, was launched out of its silo in the Marshall Islands and successfully completed all its major test objectives. It demonstrated smooth execution of the launch sequence, separation of the booster-kill vehicle, cryogenic cooling of the sensor, and positioning of the kill vehicle, among many other complex actions. For this test, there was a simulated target using data from previous launches. The interceptor successfully flew through its impact point, and had the target been real, it would have been destroyed.

This test was the latest in an extraordinary month. National attention had been focused on setbacks to our defense against long-range hostile ballistic missiles. However, this has been a month of successes for current and future elements of the Ballistic Missile Defense System that can provide a defense against both long-range and short-range threats. Perhaps these successes have flown under our radar screens, but now they deserve recognition.

In addition to this most recent test, there are at least three others that occurred in the past month worthy of note.

On November 17, an Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense SM-3 interceptor, launched by an operational crew from the USS *Lake Erie* off the coast of Hawaii, made a direct hit on an inert warhead that separated from a target missile 100 miles in space—a far more challenging scenario than previous tests.

This was the sixth successful intercept by a SM-3 in the last seven such tests since testing began in 2002. The successful intercept of a separating warhead advances our defense beyond simpler, unitary, Scud-like missiles.

Just as important was the return to flight of the terminal high altitude area defense, or THAAD, interceptor. After its last two successful flights in 1999, the program and the missile were completely overhauled to make it more reliable and easier to manufacture. On November 22, the revamped missile was launched from the White Sands Missile Range without a flaw. The test validated the interceptor's launch from canister, rocket booster operation, shroud and kill vehicle separation, and control system that guides it to the target for a kill.

And not least, just last week, on December 6, the Airborne Laser Program successfully completed a full duration lase at operational power. This involved linking the energy output of six large laser modules into a single beam, powerful enough to destroy a missile in its boost phase at the distances we need to shoot to kill. Now that the laser has successfully completed ground testing in a surrogate aircraft, it is being disassembled to load it onto its flight test Boeing 747 for further testing. The significance of achieving this milestone cannot be overemphasized—this is a revolutionary weapon with the potential to change fundamentally the ways in which we can protect our Nation, our troops, and our allies and friends from the growing ballistic missile threat.

These are the more visible Elements of the integrated Ballistic Missile Defense System. What ties all these parts together is the Global Command, Control, Battle Management and Communications System, the brain and the nerves. It is less visible than radars and rockets, but our missile defenses couldn't work without it. The integration of far-flung parts, new and upgraded, often made at different times by different contractors, has been a great challenge, but it is one we are steadily and remarkably overcoming.

There have been many naysayers and doubters on missile defense. But I am proud to have supported the Missile Defense Agency over the past year as it has grappled in an intensive effort to track down and eliminate or minimize risks that have contributed to setbacks in the past. There is an emphasis on quality that is paying off, as witnessed by these last four successful tests. We learn from our mistakes, and we now bear the fruit of the combined efforts of a wide range of dedicated military, civilian, and contractor personnel. Testing will continue, we will encounter difficulties, but the program will move forward. We are succeeding in building an integrated and layered Ballistic Missile Defense System, our defenses will continue to improve, and our citizens will be increasingly protected and grateful.

RADIATION EXPOSURE COMPENSATION ACT

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, on April 28, 2005 of this year, just hours after the National Academy of Science released its report, I stood before this body and declared the importance of amending this law. On May 9, I introduced S. 977 which places Montana on equal ground with others who have suffered from nuclear testing fallout. Again, on May 10, I stood in this Chamber and talked about the importance of this legislation for the good people of Montana. Today, I am happy to be joined in my efforts by the Senator from Idaho, who introduced similar legislation for the people of Idaho. This bill is an important step forward in securing the justice that the people of Montana deserve. This bill combines my efforts with those of Senator CRAPO to extend RECA coverage to both Montana and Idaho in a single, simple bill.

Montana, more than any other State, was affected by the downwind radiation that came from the nuclear testing in Nevada during the 1950s. The statistics are eye-opening. Of the 25 counties in the United States with the highest exposure rates, 15 are in Montana. Meagher County in Montana has a rate of exposure greater than any other county in the United States. Fifty-five out of Montana's 56 counties experienced elevated levels of radiation exposure. And yet, Montana is the only State in the region that receives absolutely no compensation from the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act whatsoever.

The reported rate of thyroid cancer—which is the health affect most associated with the exposure to Iodine-131 from this testing—is 17.5 times the national rate. Between 1989 and 2003, while the national rate of thyroid cancer increased 38 percent, Montanans saw an increase of 127 percent.

When Congress passed RECA in 1990, it was an important step toward setting a grave injustice right. As a cancer survivor myself, I know that no amount of money can heal the wounds suffered by the victims of radiation exposure. Time and time again, I have heard from Montanans who tell me that it is not about the money. The people of Montana aren't coming to their Government with their hands out. They are demanding justice. They are demanding acknowledgement of their suffering. They are demanding that we do the right thing.

When RECA was passed in 1990, my colleagues did their best to do the right thing. For that, they should be commended. For the 9,117 Americans who have received compensation for downwind exposure since RECA became law in 1990, justice has been served. Responsibility has been taken, so that wounds can begin to heal.

And, it wasn't an easy journey. The first hearings for RECA were held way back in 1979, almost 30 years ago. The questions that needed to be asked took time to answer: Was there downwind