

was followed by the FMC Red Team, led by Bob Knot. OCI Chemical's Blue Team, which was led by Gary Ruiz, placed fifth, and Solvay's Silver Team, which was led by Shawn Marshall, placed sixth.

These teams represent the best of southwest Wyoming's soda ash industry. The four companies that mine the mineral Trona in Wyoming account for 90 percent of the U.S. production of soda ash. Soda ash is a commodity required for the production of glass. It is also a very important export that accounts for \$500 million of our balance of trade.

I am very proud of this year's showing by our Wyoming soda ash industry in this competition. It is important to remember that although this is a competition, it is not a sport. The National Mine Safety Rescue Contest and other mine safety rescue contests are training events. They help prepare mine rescue teams so they are ready to act if they are ever called to deal with a situation that we hope will never occur.

When accidents happen, miners count on volunteer mine rescue teams to save them. Those mine rescue teams need to have the best resources available to them and the training they will need to be prepared for anything that may happen as they take on that important job. Mine rescue competitions play an important role in that effort by providing mine rescue teams with the kind of experience they will need if they are to perform at the highest level of efficiency in the event there is an emergency. They offer a chance for teams to improve their communication skills, to consider previously unforeseen problems, and to get feedback on their performance from contest judges.

Although these teams compete against each other in mine rescue contests, when a real world situation arises, they operate as one cohesive unit to affect a rescue. Each company can draw on the good will and collective expertise of the mine rescue teams to help bring miners in danger to safety. In the spirit of brotherhood and cooperation, the teams know that if there is a mine emergency, they will have the support they will need to bring the victims of the accident and their fellow rescue workers out of the mine and home to their families and loved ones.

In other words, while these companies compete in the marketplace and mine rescue teams compete in these contests, they will stand shoulder to shoulder should an accident occur at the mine.

I would like to include the names of each of the participants of our teams in southwest Wyoming who competed in the national mine rescue competition. Although I particularly want to congratulate the FMC White Team, the FMC Red Team, OCI Chemical's Blue Team, and Solvay's Silver Team, I congratulate and thank all those who participated. Your efforts continue to make a difference by making our mines

a safer place for all our Nation's miners to work.

The information follows.

FMC White Team: Leroy Hutchinson (Captain) (Benchman), Tony Herrera, Alan Jones (Gas), Robert Byers, Brad Roll, Bronson Berg, Vern Plantenberg, Mike Padilla (Team Trainer).

FMC White First Aid: Robert Byers, Bronson Berg, Vern Plantenberg.

FMC Red Team: Bob Knott (Captain), Mark Anderson, Rick Owens (Gas), Robert Pope, Bill Madura, Daniel Hellickson, Rod Knight (Benchman), Mike Padilla (Team Trainer), Dave Hutchinson (Team Trainer), Rick Steenberg (Official in Charge), Robert Pope, Mark Anderson, Bill Madura.

FMC Red First Aid: Robert Pope, Mark Anderson, Bill Madura.

General Chemical Blue: Jeff Downey (Captain), Doug Cox (Gas), Steve McKeehan, Mickey Smith, Willie Cederberg, Stan Owens, Terry Hansen, Leslie Wareham (Benchman), Keith Mullins (Team Trainer), David Graham (Official in Charge), Mickey Smith, Terry Hansen, Steve McKeehan.

General Chemical Blue First Aid: Mickey Smith, Terry Hansen, Steve McKeehan.

General Chemical Black: Alan Brewer (Captain), Byron Willingham, Lucas Coon (Gas), Curtiss Cooley, Jr., Steve Roberts, Tommy Graham, Ken Ball, Charles Beard (Benchman), John E. Sykes (Team Trainer), David Graham (Official in Charge), Steve McKeehan.

General Chemical Black First Aid: Byron Willingham, Steve Roberts, Curtiss Cooley, Jr.

OCI White Team: Jack J. Volsey II (Captain), Chuck Jones, Paul Larson (Gas), Ted Laughlin, Scott Counts, Kyle Butcher, Willy Moore (Benchman), Nathan Kendall, Matt Cummings (Team Trainer), Rick Terry (Team Trainer), Tim Musbach (Official in Charge).

OCI White First Aid: Chuck Jones, Ted Laughlin, Nathan Kendall.

OCI Blue Team: Gary Ruiz (Captain), Bill Mehle (Gas), Brent Skorcz, Blake Barney, Dennie Hughes (Benchman), Don O'Lexey, Richard Clark, Tyler Lovato, Rick Terry (Team Trainer), Matt Cummings (Team Trainer), Tim Musbach (Official in Charge).

OCI Blue First Aid: Blake Barney, Don O'Lexey, Dennie Hughes.

Solvay Silver Team: Shawn Marshall (Captain), Joe Thompson, Bob Clement, Scott Brown (Benchman), Gerald Maxfield (Gas), Brian Liscomb, Ryan Hansen, Dusty Martin, Jeff Tetmore (Team Trainer), John Angwin (Official in Charge).

Solvay Silver First Aid Team: Shawn Marshall, Joe Thompson, Dusty Martin.

Solvay Blue Team: Joe McDonald (Captain), Chad Rawlins (Gas), Kent Boman, Jamie McGillis, Jerry Huntington, Brian Quick, Jody Burgener, Dennis Hughes (Benchman), David Stevenson (Team Trainer), John Angwin (Official in Charge).

Solvay Blue First Aid Team: Joe McDonald, Kent Boman, Jamie McGillis.●

CREATIVE PLANTERS GARDEN CLUB

● Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, today I acknowledge the Creative Planters Garden Club of Louisiana. After the catastrophic destruction of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, this organization has dedicated itself to rebuilding the horticulture in Louisiana, and I would like to take a few moments to highlight their efforts.

Unfortunately, like many other citizens in south Louisiana, several mem-

bers of this organization lost their homes to the hurricanes that ravished our State in 2005. While many members of the Creative Planters Garden Club are rebuilding their livelihoods, they are also volunteering their time to rebuild their State. Their priorities include replacing landscape projects devastated by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and replanting the rose garden in New Orleans Botanical Gardens in City Park. It is community involvement like this that enriches our State.

For more than 23 years the Creative Planters Garden Club has worked to enhance Louisiana communities by promoting civic stewardship and horticulture education. They have worked in conjunction with many State and local government agencies to teach and encourage gardening to children.

I applaud the members of the Creative Planters Garden Club of Louisiana for their continued service to the citizens of their community.●

REAR ADMIRAL MICHAEL K. LOOSE

● Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to recognize and honor Rear Admiral Michael K. Loose for his exceptional achievement as Commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command and Chief of Civil Engineers, from October 2003 to October 2006.

As Commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, NAVFAC, Rear Admiral Loose led 17,000 civilian and military employees, executing an annual workload of \$10.6 billion supporting global contingency engineering operations, the Navy shore infrastructure, and systems command engineering and acquisition support. As the chief of civil engineers, he led Active and Reserve components of the Civil Engineer Corps community of over 2,000 officers and the enlisted Seabee community of over 20,000 sailors that jointly serve as the Navy's contingency and facilities engineering experts and comprise the Naval Construction Force of 22 battalions, 4 regiments, and other supporting units.

Upon assuming command of NAVFAC, Rear Admiral Loose quickly developed an overarching strategic plan that incorporated Department of Defense, Secretary of the Navy, and Chief of Naval Operations guiding principles. Building on this foundational document, and acutely focused on the critical imperative to dramatically reduce costs to support Sea Enterprise fleet recapitalization, improve service to joint/fleet operational commands, and align and single-up accountability, Rear Admiral Loose boldly conceptualized and implemented a dramatic restructuring and transformation of all components of NAVFAC—the most comprehensive and fundamental reorganization of the command since the Navy revamped the Bureau system more than three decades ago. As a direct result of his initiative and vision,

over \$600 million in savings were harvested and redirected to the fleet starting in the Program Objective Memoranda for fiscal year 2006. Overall, Rear Admiral Loose increased production productivity by 13 percent while reducing the required workforce by 1,100 civilian positions. Key elements of the transformation that enabled these efficiencies included dramatically consolidating and fully aligning NAVFAC field commands with Navy regional commanders. This structural realignment combined Navy public works centers focused on maintenance, transportation, and utilities services with engineering field divisions focused on planning, environmental, design, and construction services to establish a single, aligned, and vastly streamlined organization—a Regional Facilities Engineering Command. He also developed and executed strategic partnership agreements with Commander, Navy Installations Command and Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps—Installations—and Commander, Naval Supply Systems Command, to enable lowest facility life-cycle business analysis and management by leveraging the transformed NAVFAC organization. With the establishment of the single, aligned Facilities Engineering Command in each Navy region, Rear Admiral Loose operationalized NAVFAC, creating a command culture of accountability, technical competency, and responsiveness to fleet mission demands and surge requirements.

Rear Admiral Loose also aggressively supported the newly established Naval Expeditionary Combat Command/Naval Expeditionary Combat Enterprise as Systems Command Commander and first chief operating officer. He developed a \$400 million program to replace overage and expended equipment, weapons, personal protective gear, and materials supporting the Naval Construction Force extended operations in support of Operations Noble Eagle, Iraqi Freedom, and Enduring Freedom. Rear Admiral Loose guided the largest mobilization since Vietnam of Seabees and Civil Engineer Corps Officers, enabling outstanding mission support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

Clearly, Rear Admiral Loose's comprehensive knowledge of the Navy, keen judgment, and unwavering commitment to the sailor, the Navy family, and the fleet have made him an asset to the Navy. I am proud that he is my fellow New Mexican and my fellow American, and I am pleased to recognize and thank Rear Admiral Loose for his tenure as Commander, NAVFAC and Chief of Civil Engineers.

Today I honor Rear Admiral Loose for his service to our country, his inspirational moral courage, his exceptional strategic vision, and his relentlessly bold leadership. He and his wife Carol have made many sacrifices during his career in the Navy, and I call upon my colleagues and join his family, friends, and associates to wish

them "fair winds and following seas" as they embark on yet another great Navy adventure and continue their dedicated and outstanding service to this grateful Nation. •

HONORING SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH AND PARKS

• Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I honor South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks for being awarded the 2006 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award.

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks is 1 of only 15 employers nationwide to be honored with this prestigious award. The support, encouragement, and flexibility they provide to their employees who are called to serve their country with the South Dakota National Guard illustrates that they are truly deserving of this high honor. South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks serves as a fine example of South Dakotans coming together to support the cause of freedom around the world. They are going the extra mile to accommodate our service men and women and thus ensure a safer, more secure America.

Today I together with the entire State of South Dakota, commend South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks for their commitment to serving our State and our Armed Forces. •

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-8329. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Pantoea Agglomerans Strain E325; Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance" (FRL No. 8091-6) received on September 15, 2006; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-8330. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Metrafenone; Pesticide Tolerance" (FRL No. 8093-7) received on September 15, 2006; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-8331. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Dithianon; Pesticide Tolerance" (FRL No. 8090-5) received on September 15, 2006; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-8332. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Etofenprox; Pesticide Tolerances for Emergency Exemptions" (FRL No. 8089-2) received on September 15, 2006; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-8333. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting, a report on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General Joseph L. Yakovac, Jr., United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-8334. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the budget models used for base operations support, sustainment, and facilities recapitalization; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-8335. A communication from the Secretary, Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the operation of the premerger notification program and the Commission's and the Antitrust Division's merger enforcement activities during Fiscal Year 2005; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-8336. A communication from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law the report of a rule entitled "Drawbridge Regulations (including 2 regulations beginning with CGD05-06-087)" (RIN1625-AA09) received on September 14, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-8337. A communication from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Drawbridge Operation Regulations; Jamaica Bay and Connecting Waterways, New York City, NY (CGD01-06-006)" (RIN1625-AA09) received on September 14, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-8338. A communication from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Safety Zones (including 2 regulations beginning with CGD05-06-062)" (RIN1625-AA00) received on September 14, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-8339. A communication from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Special Local Regulations (including 2 regulations beginning with CGD05-06-069)" (RIN1625-AA08) received on September 14, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-8340. A communication from the Chief, Regulations and Administrative Law, U.S. Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Safety Zones (including 11 regulations beginning with CGD05-06-059)" (RIN1625-AA00) received on September 14, 2006; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-8341. A communication from the Acting Secretary of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual report on the administration of the Surface Transportation Project Delivery Pilot Program; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-8342. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Wisconsin" (FRL No. 8217-8) received on September 15, 2006; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-8343. A communication from the Principal Deputy Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting,