

the creation of the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program, AWEP, several years ago.

AWEP, which receives approximately \$60 million annually, is a “voluntary conservation initiative that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to implement agricultural water enhancement activities on agricultural land to conserve surface and ground water and improve water quality,” according to the USDA. AWEP assists farmers with the use of upland water storage ponds, irrigation system improvements, water quality improvement, and other similar efforts. It is a good program. According to ALFA—the association representing Alabama’s farmers:

Since 2009, the AWEP Initiative has made available over \$3.5 million to benefit the local economy. In Alabama, 102 farmers have improved efficiency in their irrigation operations which resulted in savings of about 875 million gallons of water per year.

However, USDA currently limits access to AWEP to farms that have been irrigated previously a requirement that prevents most Alabama farmers from being eligible for this useful program. Farmers are often required to show past irrigation records, irrigation water management plan documentation, or a map showing farm acres with irrigation history. This prior history requirement prevents some worthwhile agricultural water enhancement projects from being eligible for AWEP assistance, particularly in States where irrigation has not been significantly used. According to data in the 2007 USDA Agriculture Census, many farm acres throughout the country do not have a history of agricultural irrigation. This is especially true in my State. According to ALFA, “only about 5% of Alabama’s farms have irrigated cropland,” and this prior history requirement “has prevented the program from being more widely utilized” in Alabama.

My amendment No. 945, which was accepted, as modified, by unanimous agreement in the Senate yesterday, eliminates this unwarranted restriction and will help ensure that more farmers are eligible for USDA irrigation assistance programs. I thank the chairman and ranking member for their work in modifying my amendment to ensure that this clarification of law only applies “in states where irrigation has not been used significantly for agricultural purposes, as determined by the Secretary.” As a State with relatively little agricultural irrigation in present use, Alabama and other similarly-situated States are clearly covered by the relief provided by my amendment.

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO ADAM SCOTT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise to honor Adam Scott, a former member of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas golf team, and the first Australian to win the Masters Tournament.

Through his determination and will to win, Adam was able to come back from a heartbreaking loss at the 2012 Open Championship to win the 2013 Masters in truly stunning fashion. In a tie for the lead heading into the 72nd hole, Adam birdied with a 20-foot putt. At that point, I thought Adam had clinched the title, but another great golfer, Angel Cabrera, was able to force a playoff with his own birdie. It was not until the second hole of that playoff that Adam, through yet another birdie, was able to call himself the Master’s champion. This was his ninth PGA Tour win, but first major championship.

Adam hails from Adelaide, Australia, later moving to Queensland at the age of 9. In 1998, Adam came to my home State of Nevada to study and play golf at UNLV. While at UNLV, Adam was an All-American, finishing 11th at the 1999 NCAA Golf Championships. His victory at the Masters was the first major championship to be won by a former UNLV men’s golfer.

UNLV’s golf program has produced a lot of great players over the years, but until now, none had ever won a major championship. There have been several second-place and third-place showings, but never a champion. As a Nevadan, it is amazing to see a former UNLV player wearing the famous Augusta National Gold Club’s green jacket.

On behalf of the Senate, I congratulate Adam Scott on his victory at the Masters Tournament and look forward to continuing to follow a career that has already made Australia and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas very proud.

MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to the men and women of our Armed Forces who have given their lives in defense of the United States. Memorial Day has, since its inception in the years immediately after the end of the Civil War, been a special time for us to remember and honor all Americans who have died in military service. Nearly 150 years after the first “Decoration Day” was observed, it remains important that we as citizens of this great Nation take time to reflect on the brave servicemen and women who made the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf.

As I have noted, Memorial Day grew out of a practice started in April 1866 in Columbus, MS, with the decoration of the graves of Confederate and Union soldiers alike. The tradition of honoring both those who fell on both sides

of that conflict evolved into our modern observance of this sacred day.

Today, tens of thousands of American men and women continue to put their lives on the line to preserve and perpetuate the freedoms and liberties established with the birth of our Nation. The freedoms we enjoy in this country have often been paid for with the lives of these servicemembers. Their selfless example of service, whether made at Bunker Hill, Vicksburg, Iwo Jima, Inchon or the remotest regions of Afghanistan, inspires us to sacrifice and work for the good of our Nation.

This Memorial Day, Mississippians will again honor all brave fallen warriors, including the men and women from our State who have recently died in the service of our nation in Afghanistan and around the world.

For the RECORD, I offer the names of three brave heroes with roots in Mississippi, who have fallen since the nation commemorated Memorial Day last year. They are:

SSG Ricardo Seija, 31, of Tampa, FL, who died July 9, 2012

SFC Coater B. DeBose, 55, of State Line, MS, died Aug. 19, 2012

Specialist Patricia L. Horne, 20, of Greenwood, MS, died Aug. 24, 2012

We mourn their loss and honor them for their courage, dedication and sacrifice, and resolve that their lives were not given in vain.

This Memorial Day, the people of my State and throughout our great Nation will rightly set aside their day-to-day tasks to remember and say a prayer of thanksgiving for those who have laid down their lives for their country. We will also think of their families who share most acutely in their loss. I join them in saying thank you to those who made these great sacrifices.

TRIBUTE TO RICHARD BENDER

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, when Richard Bender retires at the end of this month, the Senate will say farewell to one of its most respected, talented, and accomplished staff members. And I personally will be saying farewell to my longest serving legislative counselor.

They say that there are no indispensable people here in Washington. Don’t believe it. For the last three and a half decades, Rich Bender has been my indispensable person—a staffer with an encyclopedic knowledge of parliamentary procedure, the legislative process, the Federal budget, as well as the rules and traditions of this body.

I am by no means the only Senator who has found Richard indispensable. In fact, he is a legend among Senators and staffers alike. Many times, the distinguished majority leader, Senator REID, has come to me with some version of this request: Tom, I am having trouble with this bill. Opponents are raising all kinds of legislative and parliamentary hurdles. Have Bender give me a call. And, by the way, Leader