

the growing northern suburbs of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, which provides state and local officials with some of our greatest transportation mobility challenges. The increase in traffic over the past three decades is a result of unprecedented population and employment growth experienced in the North Texas region.

The transportation congestion and mobility challenges of Interstate 35 East could minimize economic opportunity and investment in the North American international trade corridor if our country's leaders do not support the development of an efficient, seamless, intermodal trade and transportation system. With congressional passage of several important trade agreements, the heartland of America enters a new era as a geographic crossroad for international trade.

Interstate 35 extends from Laredo, Texas, the busiest U.S. border crossing into Mexico, to Duluth, Minnesota. One third of the highway is in Texas, including the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. Of \$57 billion in U.S. trade into Mexico annually, 78 percent moves through Laredo, and much of that on Interstate 35. The North American Superhighway's Coalition estimates it will take \$3.4 billion to upgrade Interstate 35 over the next five years. Texas alone would require about \$2.87 billion.

I am actively working with local, state, and federal officials to improve international trade transportation on Interstate 35 by widening current lanes and adding frontage roads without sacrificing Texas' ability to meet its regular mobility needs within the state. The North Texas Mobility Improvement Act of 2003 would authorize \$2.5 million to widen from four lanes to six lanes those segments of Interstate 35 East between FM Road 2181 and Lake Lewisville in Denton County. The environmental review for this interstate expansion is currently underway by the Texas Department of Transportation.

With ever-increasing demands on our transportation system for both local mobility and international trade transportation improvements, the North Texas Mobility Improvement Act of 2003 would help the Texas Department of Transportation accelerate the widening of the segments both north and south of the existing 6-lane segment in order to alleviate the overburdensome bottlenecking on this vital segment of Interstate 35 East. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the widening of this portion of Interstate 35 East. The North Texas Mobility Improvement Act of 2003 would provide for the additional needed funding to complete the project and address the immediate needs of my constituents and other North Texas commuters that Interstate 35 East on a daily basis.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CLEARWATER BASIN PROJECT ACT

HON. C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2003

Mr. OTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise before the House today to introduce the Clearwater Basin Project Act, a bill to provide for enhanced collaborative forest stewardship management within the Clearwater and Nez Perce national forests in Idaho. I am pleased to be joined by Congressman MIKE SIMPSON, a fellow Idahoan, in introducing this legislation.

The Forest Service has not been able to adequately address insect outbreak, catastrophic fire, and other fish and wildlife habitat and ecosystem health issues on the lands it manages within the basin. That is why I am introducing The Clearwater Basin Project Act to provide a better mechanism to address critical resource issues concerning Clearwater and Nez Perce national forest lands. The legislation takes advantage of existing collaboration and stewardship mechanisms to provide a more effective framework for stakeholders to work with the Forest Service to attain some meaningful forest management results on the ground.

In 1996, the state of Idaho established a Federal Land Task Force to design potential pilot projects on federal lands. The task force report identified a broken decision-making process as part of the problem on federal lands. An eight-member working group identified five pilot projects on Idaho's federal lands. The legislation I am introducing today is a product of that process. The Clearwater Basin Project Act implements concepts and addresses needs identified in the Clearwater Basin Collaborative Project that was described in the December 2000 Federal Land Task Force Working Group Report, "Breaking the Gridlock." The aims of the original Clearwater Project and the Act are to provide a better mechanism to address critical resource issues concerning Clearwater and Nez Perce national forest lands within the basin.

This legislation provides an up-to-date, reasonable and realistic approach to implementing a pilot project on national forest lands in the Clearwater Basin. The Act facilitates forest management through consensus-building procedures to expedite identification, scheduling and implementation of specific high-priority forest stewardship activities. The legislation provides a working test of innovative collaborative management, fully within the framework of existing environmental laws.

This legislation requires the Secretary of Agriculture to establish the Clearwater Advisory Panel (CAP), a collaborative group comprised of a broad spectrum of stakeholders in Clearwater Basin national forest management. The CAP is to work with the Forest Service, other agencies and the public to consider and recommend specific high-priority forest stewardship activities to implement over a five-year period within the Basin.

This act does not bypass existing environmental legislation. Rather, it requires the Forest Service and other federal agencies to complete National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other consultation and coordination procedures for each proposed schedule of activities, within one year after the Forest Service issues the public scoping notice for the proposed schedule. The appropriate forest supervisor is required to review the five-year schedule of activities for each forest, then issue a decision document within 30 days regarding whether to approve the schedule recommended by the CAP.

The Act also provides additional authority for stewardship and other contracting to prepare and carry out activities recommended and approved for priority implementation. Also authorized is monitoring to measure the success of the project and to assure accountability and determine what funding and other support is needed for the project to succeed.

It is important to note that nothing in this act (1) transfers ownership or control of any na-

tional forest lands from the United States to anyone else; (2) transfers Forest Service national forest decision authority to anyone else; (3) exempts Forest Service decisions or the priority activities from environmental laws, or from administrative appeal and judicial review; or (4) impairs opportunities for participation by any interest group or the general public.

The need for this legislation is greater now than ever. Elk City, a small rural community in my district, is an island in a sea of Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and state lands. The town is surrounded by dead and dying timber. However, because of federal regulations there is little or no access to the resource. That is threatening the local mill and placing the city and its residents at risk of catastrophic wildfires. Inaction no longer is an alternative for the Clearwater Basin. We cannot sit idly by and watch the forest burn. We must take action before our precious resource is destroyed and the lives of those dependent upon the resources are changed forever.

EIGHT AMERICAN HEROES FROM THE GREAT STATE OF OHIO

HON. STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2003

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor eight American heroes from the great State of Ohio.

JoAnn Gallitto, Robert S. Kraska, Paul J. Mizerak, Florence I. Ousley, George T. Radigan, Walter L. Ratcliffe, Kathleen C. Sauterer, and Theresa Ann Yakubik are the honorees of the distinguished Franklin A. Polk Public Servants Merit Award presented by the Cuyahoga County Bar Foundation and the Cuyahoga County Bar Association as a result of their more than twenty years of faithful service to the bench, bar and public in Cuyahoga County.

JOANN GALLITTO—CLEVELAND HEIGHTS MUNICIPAL COURT

Cleveland Heights Municipal Court Chief Deputy Clerk JoAnn Gallitto is this year's nominee of Judge A. Deane Buchanan. JoAnn has been employed at the Court since 1974, and she has been Chief Deputy Clerk since 1984. Her duties include supervision of the Civil Division of Ohio's largest single judge municipal court, the processing of new cases, judgment execution proceedings, preparation of judgment entries and a myriad of other tasks, including direct contact with the bar and public. A graduate of Shaw High School in East Cleveland, JoAnn is the eldest of 4 children, who credits her upbringing by two hard-working parents in a close, traditional Italian-American family, with instilling in her a level of encouragement and support that has allowed her to succeed personally and professionally. An avid Browns' and Indians' fan, JoAnn looks forward to a Super Bowl trophy in Cleveland sometime soon. While waiting for that event, she enjoys reading and music of the '50's and '60's, particularly that of Dean Martin, whose shows she saw frequently while visiting her favorite vacation destination Las Vegas, the home of two very good friends. JoAnn has a myriad of memories in almost three decades of work. She recalls, from early in her career, the excitement of being a witness at a wedding before her Judge, which was followed