

Historically, West Virginia's magnificent landscape has nurtured and inspired her inhabitants, endowing willing adventurers the freedom to explore, experience, and utilize her natural wonders. Native Americans came to West Virginia over 9,000 years ago and established the State's first permanent settlement in present-day St. Albans. Their ancient artifacts and impressive monuments, such as the Grave Creek Burial Mound, in Moundsville, serve as lasting tributes to the land's eternal contributions to mankind.

Today, the people of West Virginia remain free to explore and enjoy the State's unspoiled, majestic terrain. Mountainous views extend for miles in every direction, and blend seamlessly with glades of rhododendron and deep river valleys.

Hundreds of thousands of acres of forests, such as the Monongahela National Forest, blanket our State with lush plant life. West Virginia has over 50 State and national parks that protect our natural habitat and provide recreation to millions of visitors each year. Nearly 20 different species of endangered or threatened animals, including the bald eagle, have found refuge within our ecosystem.

Pocahontas County's pristine rivers and streams provide some of the best trout fishing in the State, and offer those who visit countless opportunities to escape into the serenity of the Appalachian Mountains. The county is known as the "Birthplace of Rivers" because 8 different rivers have headwaters there, with their only source of water being the fresh mountain rain.

In addition to the freedoms provided by West Virginia's natural environment, the citizens of West Virginia have fostered a social climate of acceptance, where all are free to express their thoughts and beliefs and take advantage of the benefits of a good education.

Booker T. Washington, following President Abraham Lincoln's emancipation proclamation, sought refuge in West Virginia and was raised in a small mining town called Malden. It was there that he was encouraged to follow his dream of education, and there that he developed the skills to become one of our country's foremost educators and leaders.

Another location, the Sumner School in Parkersburg, became the Nation's first free school for African-American children below the Mason-Dixon. It was operated until school segregation ended in 1954 and currently houses the Sumnerite African-American History Museum.

In addition to these advances to freedom and education made within our home State, West Virginians have consistently and overwhelmingly devoted their lives to protect the ideals on which this Nation was founded—liberty and equality.

Five hundred thousand West Virginians, since the time of the Civil War, have fought to protect our country in battles and conflicts all over the world. There are currently 200,000 vet-

erans in West Virginia, giving my State the highest per capita ratio of veterans in the Nation.

Such an impeccable record of devotion to freedom is not surprising from a State with origins like West Virginia. It was born out of the Civil War in 1863 and became the ultimate manifestation of a State's loyalty to our young country.

For 142 years West Virginians have been selfless in our love for this Nation, and our contributions to this country are best reflected in President Abraham Lincoln's own words. As our great President Lincoln said:

We can scarcely dispense with the aid of West Virginia in this struggle . . . Her brave and good men regard her admission into the Union as a matter of life and death. They have been true to the Union under very severe trials.

The meaning of these words, and the contributions of my State in the development of this country's freedom, continue to hold immense importance with West Virginians today. I am proud to be a West Virginian. So, today, as we celebrate West Virginia's 142nd birthday, we remember our history, celebrate our present, and look with hope toward the future of our truly wonderful State.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF FORBES, NORTH DAKOTA

• Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, today I salute the North Dakota community of Forbes as it celebrates its centennial this July 2-4. Its 100th anniversary is a testament to the resilience and dedication of the 64 residents who call this North Dakota town home.

Located in Dickey County a few miles east of the Coteau Hills and on the North Dakota border with South Dakota, Forbes is a town rich in North Dakota history even though it is the youngest town in the county. It boasts the Schulstad Stone House Museum, a stone house built in 1907 and furnished to that time period, and the Shimmin Tveit Museum, which has displays of historical artifacts from American Indians and early settlers. From railroad agent and town merchant, S.F. Forbes, for whom the town bears its name, to current mayor, Troy Anliker, this town has been a home on the prairie for several generations of farmers, ranchers, and business people.

The southern Dickey County area where Forbes is located boasts a diversified agricultural economy. The area has farmers who plant and harvest wheat, barley, corn, sunflowers, and soybeans, along with ranchers who manage several prominent cattle operations. Like most of rural North Dakota, the area has a rich heritage in farming and ranching.

As a part of the community's celebration, organizers have planned to honor Forbes' centennial with food, a pickup pull, a demolition derby, dancing, beard and dress judging, crafts, team penning, fireworks, a beer garden,

a pancake breakfast, and plenty of games for kids.

Again, I salute the current and past residents of Forbes as they celebrate this momentous occasion, and urge my colleagues to congratulate Forbes and its residents on their first 100 years and wish them well through the next century.●

##### 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF NEKOMA, NORTH DAKOTA

• Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, today I wish to honor a community in North Dakota that is celebrating its 100th anniversary. On July 9 and 10, the residents of Nekoma, ND, will celebrate their community's history and founding.

Nekoma is a small town in the northeastern part of North Dakota with a population of 51. Despite its small size, Nekoma holds an important place in North Dakota's history. Charles B. Billings was the postmaster of the town's first post office, which opened in 1898. The town was nearly named Polar, but it changed after the Soo Line Railroad townsite was plotted in 1905. The name Nekoma was selected by the Postal Department from a list of names submitted by the first appointed postmaster, Orzo B. Aldrich.

Nekoma is the site for America's only Safeguard ABM and Missile Site Radar military installations. Nicknamed the "prairie pyramid," the inactive installation site is just northeast of the town. The SALT treaty between the United States and the former Soviet Union, stated that only two safeguard sites were allowed—one of which was the site in Nekoma, ND, and the other in Washington, DC.

Mr. President, I ask the Senate to join me in congratulating Nekoma, ND, and its residents on their first 100 years and in wishing them well through the next century. By honoring Nekoma and all the other historic small towns of North Dakota, we keep the pioneering frontier spirit alive for future generations. It is places such as Nekoma that have helped to shape this country into what it is today, which is why Nekoma is deserving of our recognition.

Nekoma has a proud past and a bright future.●

##### 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF GARRISON, NORTH DAKOTA

• Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize a community in North Dakota that will be celebrating its 100th anniversary. On June 30-July 3, the residents of Garrison will gather to celebrate their community's history and founding.

Garrison is a vibrant community in west-central North Dakota, along the edge of beautiful Lake Sakakawea. Garrison holds an important place in North Dakota's history. Founded by two brothers, Cecil and Theodore Taylor in 1903, Garrison, like most small