

2003



At left: Rep. Gutknecht discusses the status of the Pipestone National Monument. At right: Rep. Gutknecht speaks to Edgerton elementary students about the United States Congress.



SEPTEMBER

I cosponsored a successful amendment to protect the pensions of older workers – many who have seen their retirement benefits slashed by as much as 50-percent because of age discriminatory cash balance pension conversions. Pension conversions can be especially detrimental to older workers – the very folks who have committed a significant portion of their lives to the well-being of their employer. People who have faithfully served their company and are close to retirement should not receive an unwelcome, and unexpected, change to their personal financial planning picture.

Members of the Agriculture Trade Goodwill Mission from Taiwan signed a letter of intent to purchase 15.1 million metric tons of United States wheat, soybeans and corn. Trade is important to American farmers. The Taiwanese have already purchased more than 11 million metric tons of U.S. grain and have committed to purchase at least 15 million metric tons more. Taiwan has become one of America's largest export markets for agricultural products.

OCTOBER

As Vice Chairman of the Science Committee, I wanted to showcase Minnesota's technology companies to the federal government. That's why I invited Dr. Arden Bement, Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, to Minnesota. We participated in a technology workshop and toured the laboratories at several Minnesota technology companies.

The Northern Tallgrass Prairie National Wildlife Refuge received \$470,000 as part of the Interior Appropriations Conference Report. The Prairie, established in 1999, extends from northern Iowa through west central Minnesota. The money will be spent on land acquisition and administration.

Rep. Gutknecht received 'True Blue' award from the Family Research Council for dedication to family, faith and freedom

NOVEMBER

The President signed the Partial Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003. A majority of the medical community, American public and Congress all agree that partial-birth abortion is inhumane and victimizes the most vulnerable among us. This bill is a life saver for thousands.

The Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, HR 2754, included \$17 million for the Lewis and Clark water project and \$19 million for the Upper Mississippi River System – Environmental Management Program.

The House passed the Energy Policy Act of 2003, HR 6. By focusing on renewable fuels, such as ethanol, bio-diesel and wind power, this bill reduces our dependence on foreign oil. This comprehensive bill is a huge victory for rural America and, especially, greater Minnesota.



Congressman Gutknecht speaks about renewable energy at the opening of the wind park in Adams.

"Grandma said, 'Busy people are happy people.' By that measure, we had a very productive – and happy – year."
-Congressman Gil Gutknecht

Connections

This brochure was printed on recycled paper with soybean-based ink. It was printed and distributed for only 9 cents a piece.

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A Record of Accomplishments

FIRST DISTRICT, MINNESOTA

YEAR END REPORT, 2003

The Year in Review

2003

To begin the year, I was named Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee's Subcommittee on Operations, Oversight, Nutrition and Forestry.

I also serve on the House Budget Committee and as Vice Chairman of the House Science Committee.



At left: Rep. Gutknecht learns about hydrogen technology at a demonstration on Capitol Hill. Above: Congressman Gutknecht speaks about the War on Terrorism at Rochester's 'Support Our Troops' event.



At left: Rep. Gutknecht meets with Kate Stahl about prescription drug costs. Above right: Rep. Gutknecht spoke with constituents about agriculture issues at the Minnesota State Fair.



JULY

My Pharmaceutical Market Access Act of 2003 passed the House 243-186. The measure allows American consumers market access to FDA-approved prescription drugs from FDA-approved facilities in 25 industrialized countries. For too long, Americans have been held captive in a market that forces them to pay three, four, five, even ten times as much for the same prescription drugs as our friends in Canada and Europe. We stood with American seniors, moms and dads, our kids – truly all Americans – and sent a very clear message that the status quo is not acceptable.

Rep. Gutknecht returned more than \$100,000 of his 2002 office budget to the general fund – more than \$800,000 since he first came to Congress

"We try to run a tight ship. I am always cognizant of the fact that we are spending taxpayers' dollars. This office doesn't belong to my staff or me. It belongs to the people of southern Minnesota."

-Congressman Gil Gutknecht

AUGUST

The USDA announced that Minnesota received \$4.7 million for renewable fuels projects, \$4.3 million of which went to the First District. This is a testament to the good folks who are harnessing wind power across southern Minnesota. These grants clearly demonstrate that southern Minnesota has become a leader in wind and renewable energy. The grants are made available under the USDA's Renewable Energy Systems and Energy Efficiency Improvements programs. These projects are designed to increase the use of environmentally friendly wind power and help diversify the nation's energy supply. First District awardees for these highly competitive grants represent Blue Earth, Dodge, Jackson, Murray, Nobles and Rock Counties.

The Health Savings and Affordability Act of 2003 passed the House 237-191 with my Medical Savings Account (MSA) initiative incorporated in this bill. This finally gives public employees access to MSAs. Now all Minnesotans - both public and private employees - have more control over their health care spending and a way to save for long term care. H.R. 2596 creates tax-free personal savings accounts to help pay out-of-pocket medical expenses, including treatment of diseases, prescription drugs and long-term care.

In response to my letter, the Office of Management and Budget announced, "...the Administration will provide for FY 2003 an additional \$3.8 million for the Lewis and Clark Water Project. This is in addition to the \$2 million already provided..." Lewis and Clark will provide safe, reliable drinking water to 200,000 people in Minnesota, Iowa and South Dakota when completed.

MAY

The Jobs and Growth Tax Act of 2003 passed the House 222-203. Putting money back into the pockets of hard working Americans is the right thing to do. But leadership must couple these efforts with a return to a sense of fiscal discipline. The federal budget shouldn't grow any faster than the average family budget. H.R. 2 increases the child credit, eliminates the marriage penalty, decreases the Alternative Minimum Tax and reduces the tax rate on dividends and capital gains.

JUNE

An amendment to the Constitution authorizing Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States passed the House 300-125. Our flag is more than a piece of cloth. It's a symbol of all that is good, honorable and just about our great nation. It's a symbol of freedom that keeps the lamp of liberty burning brightly not just within our borders, but throughout the world.

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service made available \$4,295,000 in taxpayer dollars for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) in the First District. The 2002 Farm Bill made a dramatic commitment to conservation programs such as EQIP. It's important that we give our farmers the resources they need to protect and preserve the land for generations to come.

APRIL

The Energy Policy Act of 2003 passed the House 247-175. This bill recognizes the importance of renewable fuel sources to our national security and rural economy. And we have a lot of good folks throughout southern Minnesota who are using cutting edge technology to produce clean fuel sources, such as ethanol, bio-diesel and wind. H.R. 6 requires a percentage of the nation's fuel supply come from renewable energy sources. The legislation protects our national security by expanding the Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR); streamlines government regulation on hydroelectric power production, keeping vital dams in operation; and establishes a clean coal technology initiative.

Minnesota scenic byways received \$277,000 for repairs and improvements. Anyone who has driven along the Mississippi River and in the Minnesota River Valley knows the treasures we have here at home. This federal commitment to our historical centers is vital.

Rep. Gutknecht received 'Taxpayers' Friend' award and 'A' grade from the National Taxpayers Union for votes to reduce and control the burden on American taxpayers



FEBRUARY

The Federal Emergency Management Agency released \$2.6 million in Flood Mitigation Assistance money to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for the voluntary acquisition of flood-prone residential properties located in Austin. The residents of Austin had waited long enough. This brings us closer to a solution to the regular flood events Austin has experienced.

With the size of the new First Congressional District, it became necessary to open a second office. With offices in Rochester and now in Fairmont, 95-percent of the people in the First District are within one hour's drive. Constituent service is one of the most important parts of my job. I have nine friendly people in my district offices to serve your needs.

At my request, Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman announced a reduction in cross-border county crop loan rate discrepancies. This was a huge win for folks who live on the Minnesota side of the border.

Producers who feed their crops to livestock are now eligible for payments based on 100-percent of the county yield average. This was another win for our farmers. We want them to feed more of their feed grains through to livestock. Allowing livestock producers to collect 100-percent of county yield average was another step toward making certain the livestock industry remains strong.

MARCH

Mankato West teacher Eric Koser was awarded a 2002 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. Science and technology are cornerstones of our nation's success, and the road to success begins with our teachers. The Presidential Award program, administered by the National Science Foundation (NSF), bestows the nation's highest honor for mathematics and science teachers for K-12.

The Upper Mississippi River Basin Protection Act passed the House 411-13. This bipartisan bill was the result of farmers, sportsmen, conservationists and government agencies working together to monitor water quality in the Upper Mississippi River Basin. The bill establishes a water quality monitoring network and an integrated computer-modeling program to provide data to make scientifically and economically sound conservation decisions that will benefit our district and the entire nation.

The Child Abduction Prevention Act of 2003 passed the House 410-14. Moms and dads can take comfort in knowing that we – as an American community – will work together to bring abducted children home safely. When a child is abducted, the first 24 hours are critical. This bill deploys the latest technology, such as the AMBER alert system, to catch the criminals.