

Congressman Bud Cramer

November 2003

E-Newsletter



This time of year is always a busy time in Washington D.C. As the year draws to a close, lawmakers are working hard to pass many important pieces of legislation. However, one of the most important pieces of legislation that we have passed recently was the Defense Authorization Bill. Included in this bill is a provision that will provide concurrent receipt of military retirement and VA disability pay to many of our veterans. During times of war we are reminded not only of those that are currently fighting overseas, but also of those that fought to make America what it is today. I will continue to fight in Congress for increased veterans benefits, including full concurrent receipt for all of our nation's veterans. This is one way that we can give our nation's veterans the proper respect that they deserve.

Bud Cramer

FY04 Appropriations Update:

Congress passed the Interior, Military Construction, and Energy and Water Appropriations Conference Reports this month. Among the many North Alabama projects that received funding through these bills are:

- Phase III of the Von Braun Complex at Redstone Arsenal - \$20 million
- Tuscumbia Spring Creek Study - \$235,000
- Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area Study
- Pond Spring Collections Facility - \$150,000
- Point Mallard Marina Study - \$200,000
- Vibration Dynamic Test Facility - \$5.5 million

Washington Update

Earlier this month, Congressman Cramer sent a letter to President Bush urging him to reinvigorate NASA and increase the space agency's budget. The letter was written by Cramer, U.S. Representative Tom Delay, and U.S. Representative Dave Weldon, and signed by 101 Members of the House of Representatives. Cramer said, "A strong NASA is key to maintaining our technological edge over the rest of the world."

On November 22nd, the House of Representatives passed the first ever comprehensive reform of Medicare. Alabama Hospitals will receive almost \$1 billion in Medicare reimbursements as a result of this legislation. North Alabama hospitals will receive over \$115 million. This legislation included voluntary prescription drug benefits for seniors for the first time.

District Update



Congressman Cramer was honored by officials from the University of North Alabama on November 17th. UNA unveiled Cramer Way, a pedestrian walkway on the UNA campus in front of Wesleyan Hall and Willingham Hall (above).

Congressman Cramer participated in a roundtable discussion with officials from Lexington Fabrics in Florence. The Congressman discussed issues related to NAFTA and the possible restart of Lexington Fabrics. "It is important that we sit down and talk about the issues that are important to the future of Lexington Fabrics and the textile industry in North Alabama," added Cramer (below left).



Congressman Cramer viewed a demonstration of the Battlefield Ordnance Awareness/Small Tactical Arms Recognition Equipment. Congressman Cramer was able to secure funds over the past two years for the design and development of this system. This technology can detect the muzzle flash of gunfire and pinpoint the location and type of weapon being fired. Once deployed, this technology will help protect the lives of our soldiers (above right).



On November 24th, Congressman Cramer presented LaGretta Ratliff with a certificate naming her an "Angel in Adoption." Cramer nominated Ms. Ratliff for the adoption of her two children, Chase and Taylor. Ms. Ratliff was unable to attend the award ceremony in D.C. so the Congressman brought the award home to her. Pictured to the left, are Cramer, Ratliff (center), and Cramer Aide Peggy Towns.