



## Congressman Bud Cramer

October 2004

E-Newsletter

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### Washington Update

The U.S. House of Representatives is continuing its work on the thirteen Appropriations Bills for the upcoming year. The Appropriations Committee, of which Congressman Cramer is a member, has approved all thirteen appropriations bills. This month, the House approved the conference report for the Military Construction Appropriations Bill, which included \$19.56 million for the Phase II construction of the Von Braun Complex at Redstone Arsenal. The conference report also provided \$11.6 billion for hurricane disaster relief funding to assist recovery efforts in response to Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne.

Also this month, the House approved bipartisan legislation that would expedite the safe placement of foster and adoptive children into homes across state lines. Representative Cramer was an original cosponsor of this legislation along with House Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R-Texas). The Safe and Timely Interstate Placement Act of 2004 would establish a sixty day federal deadline to determine whether a home is appropriate for a child and would authorize a \$1,500 incentive payment to the receiving state for each interstate home study completed within thirty days.

On October 9<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. House of Representatives approved the FY 2005 Department of Defense conference report, which provides over \$445 billion for defense programs. This year's bill includes provisions that assist our soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan by making permanent the \$225 per month rate for imminent danger pay and the \$250 per month family separation pay. This legislation also allows veterans who are 100 percent disabled to immediately receive both their military retirement pay and their VA disability pay beginning in January of 2005 and it also puts an end to the Survivor Benefit Penalty. Additionally, this legislation authorizes the Department of Defense to incrementally increase the survivor's benefits for military spouses aged 62 and older back to 55 percent by 2008.

Pictured on the right, the National Federation of Independent Business honored Rep. Cramer by naming him a "Guardian of Small Business." NFIB recognized Representative Cramer with this award for his voting record on behalf of America's small businesses in the 108th Congress.



### District Update

This month, Rep. Cramer and MSFC Director Dave King held a news conference to congratulate Mark McDaniel on his reappointment to the NASA Advisory Council (NAC). The NAC provides the NASA Administrator with counsel and advice on NASA's policies, programs, and strategies. Members are appointed for two year terms and may be reappointed for additional terms by the NASA Administrator. Mr. McDaniel has been a member of the council since 2001.

Also this month, Representative Cramer hosted a Methamphetamine Education Forum for hospitality professionals in Madison County to raise awareness about the meth problem and help industry professionals understand the dangers associated with meth production and clean-up. Cramer said, "Hotel and Motel operators have a unique perspective on the meth problem in North Alabama. The threat of toxic exposure is real and it's important that our hospitality industry professionals are familiar with the risks associated with the drug and are able to identify the signs of a meth lab."



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### District Update

On October 20, Representative Cramer met with Shoals area officials to discuss the area's continued growth and regional cooperation. Cramer met with Colbert County Commission Chairman James Bingham, Lauderdale County Commission Chairman Judge Dewey Mitchell, Sheffield Mayor Billy Don Anderson, Florence Mayor Bobby Irons, Muscle Shoals Councilmember Allen Noles, and Tuscumbia Councilmember Bobby Mitchell. Cramer said, "There are many new faces here today who are bringing fresh and innovative ideas to the area. There are also a good number of returning leaders who bring a wealth of experience and a balance that will help this area continue to move forward. All of us are part of one team working together for the benefit of the entire Shoals area."



Pictured on the left, Representative Cramer and U.S. Senator Richard Shelby celebrated the completion of \$13.4 million in capital improvements to the Huntsville International Intermodal Center. The International Intermodal Center provides a single hub location for receiving, transferring, storing, and distributing air, rail, and highway cargo. This year, the center completed \$13.4 million of its ongoing \$24 million expansion. This phase of the expansion included the purchase of a new overhead crane, the refurbishment and extension of railroad track, and general improvements to the paving, lighting, fencing and drainage of the center. "These improvements will help add to the competitiveness of the airport and the entire area," said Cramer.

On October 19<sup>th</sup>, Representative Cramer presented over \$8 million to Housing Authority Directors from across North Alabama. The funding is part of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Capital Fund Program, which awards grants on an annual basis to public housing agencies for the development, financing, and modernization of public housing developments. The funding is used for improvements such as the basic modernization of heating and air-conditioning units, and upgrading windows and doors to be more energy efficient.

Pictured on the right, Representative Cramer (D-Ala.) presented funding to officials from the City of Hartselle. Hartselle received \$500,000 for wastewater system improvements and \$70,000 for the installation of laptop computers in Hartselle Police patrol cars. Cramer secured this funding through his position on the House Appropriations Committee. He is a member of both the VA-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee and the CJS Appropriations Subcommittee, which provided the funding for the City of Hartselle. Cramer said, "My position on the House Appropriations Committee puts me in a strong position to help Hartselle continue to be a great place to live, work, and raise a family."

