



Congressman Bud Cramer

June 2003
E-Newsletter

Memorial Day was especially significant this year as we paused to remember those who have died fighting for our freedom – including many of our young men and women who fought in Afghanistan and Iraq. It was also a time to recognize the veterans who are still with us. The House voted on bills this month that will help our veterans as well as soldiers currently in the military - including a bill authorizing over \$400 billion for defense programs.

I encourage you to visit my new website: <http://cramer.house.gov>. I hope this resource will be helpful for folks looking for more information about Congress, legislation, the Fifth District of Alabama, Washington, D.C, as well as my thoughts about current issues and how I can help make dealing with federal agencies a little easier.

Bud Cramer

Washington Update

The House approved a \$400.5 billion Defense Authorization Bill on May 22, which included an average 4.1% pay raise for military personnel. The bill authorizes \$9.1 billion for missile defense programs, which is \$1.3 billion more than the current level, and authorizes \$3.6 billion to Midcourse Defense, \$30 million over the President's request.

May 1st was ALS Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill. Cramer is joining his colleagues in urging increased funding for ALS research and working to speed up the processing of Social Security Disability benefits for people who suffer from ALS.

Other legislation passed by the House of Representatives in May:

- May 15 - reauthorization of the National Transportation Safety Board, which investigates accidents and makes safety recommendations aimed at preventing future accidents.
- May 20 - making it a crime for anyone who defaces any Armed Forces monument on federal property.
- May 22 - a bill providing a cost-of-living increase in veterans' disability benefits.
- May 31 - legislation to extend federal unemployment benefits to displaced workers for 13 additional weeks.

District Update

Cramer celebrated with Toyota on May 12th the roll-out of their first V-8 engine produced in America. Cramer said, "Toyota is an excellent corporate citizen that contributes much to our economy and our community. This ceremony is a tribute to the quality of workforce we have here in North Alabama and I commend the Toyota employees for this achievement." Toyota first announced plans to build the engine manufacturing plant in Huntsville in February 2001.

Also this month, Congressman Cramer hosted the Tennessee Valley Corridor Economic Summit in Huntsville.

"Creating America's Next Generation Transportation Solutions" was the theme of this year's summit, which featured speakers including General Paul Kern, Commanding General, U.S. Army Materiel Command; Jerry Creedon, Associate Administrator for Aerospace Technology, NASA; Paula Lillard of Toyota; and Eileen Collins, NASA Astronaut and Commander of the Space Shuttle's return-to-flight. Cramer said the Summit helped build on public-private partnerships in the Tennessee Valley Region and develop initiatives to further involve the area in future transportation solutions.



On May 5th, Cramer joined Raytheon officials to celebrate the official roll-out of the Army Airborne Command and Control System (A2C2S) that is installed in Blackhawk helicopters to provide Army commanders with "on the move" access to critical information. Raytheon has already developed four prototypes, two of which have been used in Iraq. The technology can also help homeland security agencies communicate during a crisis.



Cramer also announced that victims of the severe weather who are seeking SBA loan assistance for physical damage must apply through FEMA by July 11, 2003 and that victims seeking assistance for economic injury should apply by February 12, 2004. To apply for the federal assistance, contact FEMA at 1-800-621-FEMA, or 1-800-621-3362.