

Last week, my staff and I journeyed throughout the six counties of the First Congressional District to hear your views first-hand and to take your ideas back to Washington.

Next week, I will comment in greater detail about what I learned during our 13 stops. But, for now, I just want to say "thank you" to everyone who joined me in city halls and community centers from Chatom to Orange Beach.

Suffice it to say the economy and the oil spill dominated the conversation. I am continually humbled to be your voice in Congress and believe that our democracy can only work when citizens and their elected officials share views.

#### **Local Veteran Honored with National Recognition:**

A local veteran was recently spotlighted for his courage and triumph over physical disabilities. David Riley, a 50-year-old retired Coast Guard aviation survival technician from Semmes, Alabama, was named Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year by the Disabled Veterans Association during their national convention in Atlanta.

A former rescue swimmer for the Coast Guard, Riley is a quadruple amputee who serves the local veterans community as a volunteer. David Riley is not only a model of courage, having overcome the physical challenges that beset him, but he is also an inspiration to others both with and without disabilities.

Congratulations, David, for your heroic accomplishments!

## **South Alabamians Talk about Interning in Congress:**

Each summer, my congressional offices welcome interns from across South Alabama. Five college juniors recently worked alongside my staff in Washington and each got a rare chance to see Congress from the inside while also maintaining connections to their home state. This week, I asked them to share with you what they took home from their Washington experience.

**Kelly Baker from Fairhope:** "My four weeks serving as an intern for Congressman Jo Bonner exceeded my wildest imaginations. The opportunities presented such as attending Congressional hearings dealing with dispersants used for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and helping concerned constituents with issues they're having are endless. The responsibilities given were ones that I believe have challenged me and prepared me to enter the workforce with confidence and furthered my knowledge of the legislative process. To be surrounded by the history of our nation's Capitol, while serving Congressman Bonner's constituents has been humbling and rewarding."

**Mary Duncan Waters from Mobile:** "This summer I had the privilege of working for Congressman Jo Bonner. During my internship, I did more than I ever imagined. On a daily basis we handled constituents concerns through phone calls, mail, and faxes. We also gave tours of the capitol building to some constituents. One day, I sat in on a hearing where Mayor Craft and many congressmen were discussing the financial plans about the oil spill. I was also able to write a tribute that will be in the Congressional Record forever. This has truly been an amazing opportunity."

**Rayford Smith from Monroeville:** "My internship with Congressman Jo Bonner this month has far exceeded my expectations. My favorite part has been answering calls and reading letters from the Congressman's constituents. It has truly enlightened me on how badly our area is struggling, and all of the good that is being done to try to turn our economy around. I feel I can speak for us all when I say it has been extremely rewarding being able to help constituents. This has been a truly irreplaceable experience, one that we will all treasure for many years to come."

**Kathleen Galloway from Mobile:** "Being in Washington D.C. has been the most amazing time I could hope for. I have been able to observe the political world in a way I never thought possible. I have attended a Financial Services Committee hearing and saw firsthand discussions that directly relate to Gulf Coast businesses. I have been given opportunities to visit

numerous monuments and museums that have greatly expanded my understanding of United States history and culture."

**Frances Morrissette from Mobile:** "Interning for Congressman Jo Bonner's office has been very exciting and rewarding. We have had the privilege to give Capitol tours to constituents, sit in on congressional hearings pertaining to our interests, and write tributes that are entered into the Congressional Record. Being able to personally interact with constituents and be a part of the legislative process has given us a political understanding and appreciation we would not have acquired otherwise."

If you or someone you know would be interested in a congressional internship, please visit my web site for more information. My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.