

This Week in Washington



WITH CONGRESSMAN
JO BONNER

Historic Week for Mobile

Last week will go down in the history books for the city of Mobile. After years of anticipation, our city celebrated the grand openings of two local institutions – the new container terminal at the Port of Mobile and the Mitchell Cancer Institute.

As a reader of Mobile's Press-Register recently wrote in a letter to the editor, "Both are located within the city limits of Mobile, but their arms reach around the world."

The new container terminal opens the Port of Mobile as the new gateway for containerized cargo to U.S. markets creating 300 permanent jobs, a number that is expected to increase to 470 jobs over the next ten years.

The new container terminal will be a huge boost for Alabama's industries — helping them compete and win in today's global economy. It will also help Alabama, as we continue in our efforts to recruit new industries to our state.

One of the driving forces in a decision to locate a new business is transportation infrastructure, and Mobile is uniquely situated to provide transportation access to major markets across the country with its two interstate systems, five railroads, and nearly 15,000 miles of inland waterway connections.

Not only will this new facility enable the Port of Mobile to handle the needs of Alabama but also the needs of regional manufacturers throughout the Southeast.

The Port of Mobile is now the 10th largest in the United States in terms of cargo tonnage. Now that the terminal is fully operational, Mobile is poised to join an impressive list of other U.S. ports such as Los Angeles, New York, Houston, and Charleston—as one of the top ports in the nation.

As I mentioned, the Mitchell Cancer Institute officially opened its doors last week as well.

First proposed eight years ago by University of South Alabama President Gordon Moulton, himself a cancer survivor, the Mitchell Cancer Institute is the first academic cancer research institute in the upper Gulf Coast region. It combines cancer research and treatment in one place.

With the unprecedented support of the Mitchell family, who made a \$22 million gift to the university in 2006, today the institute is a reality.

Designed to treat as many as 40,000 patients per year, the Mitchell Cancer Institute will open the doors of recovery to those living with cancer.

As Lance Armstrong once said, “If children have the ability to ignore all odds and percentages, then maybe we can learn from them. When you think about it, what other choice is there but to hope?”

That is exactly what this facility will provide – hope. Hope to the young mother diagnosed with breast cancer – hope to the wife whose husband is battling lung cancer – hope to patients and their families.

Historic Presidential Election

Speaking of the history books, last week's presidential election was nothing short of historic.

Senator Barack Obama's election as our nation's 44th president will make him the first African American to ascend to the White House.

Just as remarkable, Election Day brought record numbers of voters to the election booth – many voting for the very first time.

With more than 120 million ballots counted and many states still counting absentee ballots, many analysts are predicting the total to reach 133.3 million voters, which is about 62.5% of registered voters.

As a public servant and as an American, I can think of no more gratifying way of watching democracy in action than to see millions of voters head to the polls and cast their vote in support of a particular candidate.

What is important now is for all Americans – Democrats, Republicans, and Independents – to join together in working to achieve our common goals.

Please allow me to add how truly honored – and humbled – I am that the people of south Alabama have entrusted me with the opportunity to continue being your voice in the U.S. Congress.

Please do not hesitate to share your thoughts and opinions with me in the coming weeks and months on issues facing our district, state, and nation.

While I can't always make every one of you happy all of the time, I promise I will always strive to make sure you get the kind of constituent service and representation you have come to expect from this office.

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 or visit my website <http://bonner.house.gov>

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