



*Thoughts From . . .*

## **CAPITOL HILL**

By Congressman Rodney Alexander



April 24, 2007

# **Earth Day Reminds Us of Our Responsibility to Future Generations**

This past Monday, I had the pleasure of attending an Earth Day event at Rayville High School, which included a student-attended program titled “Washington Comes to Rayville.”

During the event, representatives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Keep Louisiana Beautiful organization informed students and other elected officials on the state and federal levels of specific projects that were in the works for the 5<sup>th</sup> District.

Being a typical Louisianian, who loves to spend time hunting, fishing, and, yes, even mowing the yard and working in the garden, I consider Earth Day an important reminder of how grateful we should be for our world – and how we should be mindful to take better care of our surroundings for the sake of future generations. Years from now, I want my six grandchildren and my future great-grandchildren to be able to enjoy nature the way I have throughout my life.

Hearing about changes – large and small – that residents in the 5<sup>th</sup> District are making to improve the environment and economy was inspiring, and I wondered how much stronger our country would be if those of us working in our nation’s Capitol made similar efforts.

Fortunately, it seems Washington is on its way. In 2005, Congress passed the Energy Policy Act, which required the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) to reduce energy consumption in 2006 by 2 percent. Recently, the AOC reported that Capitol Hill surpassed this goal, reducing energy consumption by 6.5 percent.

Additionally, in anticipation of Earth Day, which is officially observed on April 22, House leadership released the “Green the Capitol” initiative, which outlined steps that can be made on Capitol Hill to make it a better steward of the environment. Here is a sample of some of the plan’s suggestions:

- Buying 100 percent of the Capitol’s electric power supply from renewable sources such as wind power.
- Improving the efficiency of the distribution of heating and cooling by plugging leaks in heating ducts.
- Encouraging Capitol Hill staffers to use mass transit instead of driving to work.

- Replacing all of the light fixtures and turning off lighting in the evening when the House is not in session.

The last suggestion on the list – turning off the lights – shows how making an effort to do something simple, something parents have been telling their children to do for ages, can make a big difference.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Web site, <http://www.epa.gov/>, offers many suggestions just as simple that people can try in their homes, communities, schools and places of business. Some the tips include ways to make homes more energy efficient, how to reduce household hazardous wastes, and how to use pesticides correctly.

This year, as my family and I make efforts to pick up better habits that can help protect our environment, I am excited to know that thousands of other families in the 5<sup>th</sup> District will be doing the same.

**U.S. Rep. Rodney Alexander, R-Quitman, represents the 5th Congressional District and serves on the House Appropriations Committee and the House Budget Committee. He can be reached at the Monroe District Office (318-322-3500), the Alexandria District Office (318-445-0818) or Washington, D.C. (202-225-8490.) Visit Alexander's Web site at [www.house.gov/alexander](http://www.house.gov/alexander) or write him at 316 Cannon House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515.**

# # #