



Congressman
BENNIE THOMPSON
REPRESENTING THE SECOND DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI



The Thompson Report

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MISSISSIPPI

AGRICULTURE
BLUES
HISTORY

Teddy Roosevelt and Holt Collier Refuges Approved

On July 24, 2003, I introduced H.R. 2894 — a bill to establish the "Theodore Roosevelt National Wildlife Refuge". In addition, the bill would recognize the contributions of Holt Collier, a native of Greenville, and President Roosevelt's hunting guide.

In 1902, President Roosevelt came to the Delta to hunt bear and campaign. Collier strongly desired that the President shoot a bear so he captured one and tied it to a tree; Roosevelt refused to shoot it. Clifford Berryman ran two editorial cartoons on the front page of The Washington Post. The cartoon resulted in the Teddy Bear being created.

Roosevelt and Collier were not only great hunters, but leaders in our Nation's conservation

movement. That is why I am pleased to announce creation of the Teddy Roosevelt and Holt Collier National Wildlife Refuges.

Located in Holmes, Humphreys, Leflore, Sharkey, Warren and Washington

Counties, the refuges will provide a significant economic boost to the area. The South Delta will be home to the only national wildlife refuge named for President Roosevelt and the only national wild-

"I am pleased to announce creation of the Teddy Roosevelt and Holt Collier National Wildlife Refuges."

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Transportation Funding Vital: 2004 Bill to Come

Mississippi's transportation network is a testament of how far our transportation services have progressed. Many of us have long awaited strides in the area of transportation are extremely excited about this service; how-

ever, we realize that we can not stop here. We must continue to stay in touch with technological advances and improvements made in those areas.

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What's all the noise about "Mad Cow"?

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE or "mad cow disease") is a fatal degenerative neurological disease of cattle. It is believed to be caused by an abnormal protein, called a "prion". BSE is spread to cattle in feed,

but not transmitted directly from one animal to another in a herd. The disease is also thought to be transmissible to humans who eat contaminated beef.

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Claim the Earned Income Tax Credit: Assists Low-Income Families and Helps Local Economy

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of a very important provision in the federal tax code—the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). EITC, which was enacted in 1975, is the most powerful federal anti-poverty vehicle in American History. It makes a real difference for millions of low-income hardworking families and

local communities every year by putting money back into their pockets.

Hardworking families with incomes up to \$34,692 can claim the credit and receive as much as \$4,200 in assistance — depending on total income, earned income, family size and other variables. Many eligible working families in rural, sub-

urban, and urban communities forgo claiming the EITC because they do not know about it or think claiming it is too complicated.

As a result, hundreds of millions of dollars that should go back to the hardworking families and local economies remain here in Washington. I want to make sure that

working families are able to make their money work hard for them through the EITC program.

Below, you will find a chart that will provide some insight into the tax credits for which certain households are eligible.

For additional information, please contact Curtis Austin in my Washington, D.C., office.

EITC factor	Filing unit with:			
	No children	One child	Two or more children	Two or more children Filing Jointly
Maximum earned income amount	\$4,990	\$7,490	\$10,510	\$10,510
Maximum EITC	\$382	\$2,547	\$4,204	\$4,204
Breakeven Income	\$11,230	\$29,666	\$33,692	\$34,692

Visit Congressman Thompson on the Web at www.house.gov/thompson.

Thompson Pushes Rural Assistance

(Continued from page 1)

TEA – 21, thus far, has been a considerable achievement, but there is still much need in rural America. There are still limited transportation avenues that connect communities in an effort to promote economic growth. Many of the funds garnered through the 1998 transportation bill (TEA – 21) were used to repair existing transportation avenues. Now, we want to



move our focus on building new transportation infrastructure that will foster the aforementioned growth.

On another note, senior citizens deserve all the rights and privileges as any other citizen. While a number of services are available to our seniors, the lack of emergency services has been a major concern for decades. I support increasing emergency resources and I also support a non-emergency transportation component that provides healthcare access. In our rural areas, the volunteer emergency services play a tremendous role during emergencies. An increase in resources for volunteer emergency departments is an initial progression of many needed advancements.

As a means of improving our workforce training efforts, I support expanding employment transportation. In the past, commuting to and from work has been a major obstacle for many residents who do not have a means of transportation. Our efforts to improve the quality of life for all will be significantly impacted by the next round of highway funding. While many details are still being worked out, I am

confident Mississippi's transportation infrastructure will be improved.

"...we want to move our focus on building new transportation infrastructure that will foster the aforementioned growth."

For more information, please contact Karis Gutter in my Washington, D.C., office.

Roosevelt, Collier Refuges to Improve Local Economy



President Roosevelt's Hunting Group

(Continued from page 1)

life refuge named for an African-American. The refuges will serve as a national tourist attraction and will be a starting place to entice some of the approximately 2,000,000 annual visitors from Vicksburg into the Delta. These visitors can be a substantial economic force in our economy.

The Roosevelt refuge will encompass lands around the historic hunt location and connect other public lands in the Delta that will serve as wildlife corridors.

Although this legislation has the benefit of enhancing conservation, it has a main purpose of improving the economic well-being of the Delta. Most people don't think of hunting and fishing in terms of economic development, but it very much is. For example, in 2001, 357,000 hunters and 586,000 anglers spent \$670 million in Mississippi in pursuit of their pastime which supported 12,258 jobs in the state. These anglers and hunters have a \$1.2 billion economic impact on Mississippi.

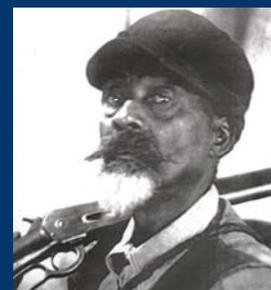
According to the Congressional Sportsman's Caucus, which I am proud to be a member of, nationally, in 2001, 38 million sportsmen age 16 and older spent more than \$70 billion dollars - that would rank hunters and anglers #11 on the Fortune 500 if they formed a corporation.

In state sales, income and fuel taxes, Mississippi's sportsmen annually pay \$55.6 million; this could fund almost 1,900 teachers' salaries or the education expenses of

more than 10,000 students. Mississippi's sportsmen annually spend more than the value of the state's cotton crop on hunting and fishing (\$670 million versus \$406 million).

Based in part on the economic gains brought on by similar refuges in comparable regions of the country, I am convinced growth in wildlife-dependent recreation is a viable means of strengthening the Delta economy. For example, Eufaula National Wildlife Refuge in Alabama and Georgia creates approximately \$7 million in annual visitor recreation-related expenditures and more than \$2 million in job income.

For more information, please contact I. Lanier Avant in my Washington, D.C., office.



Holt Collier

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What's Being Done to Safeguard Against Mad Cow?

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On December 23, 2003, the Secretary of Agriculture announced that a Holstein dairy cow in Washington State had tested positive for BSE, the first case discovered in the United States and the second native case in North America. The animal was born in 1997 in Canada. USDA, which regulates the safety of most meats, and other experts contend that the risk to human health from the case is minimal. In fact, when the House Agriculture Committee held

hearings on BSE, Secretary Veneman testified that more could and should be done. Still, authorities launched a major investigation to determine exactly how the animal became infected and the whereabouts of other animals that may have consumed BSE-contaminated feed.

On December 30, 2003, the Secretary announced a series of policy changes intended to improve USDA's system for protecting against BSE. They include banning downer (non-ambulatory

or can not rise from a recumbent position and walk) cattle from entering facilities that slaughter them for human consumption; keeping additional animal parts considered to be at higher risk from the food supply; holding animal carcasses selected for BSE testing until their brain tissue tests negative; and accelerating work on a national system to identify and track individual animals.

I am convinced that we can do a better job of securing our food supply. As this issue re-

ceives more attention in Congress, I will work to make sure USDA has the resources and methods in place to fully track and more frequently test possible sources of contamination.

For more information, please contact Karis Gutter in my Washington, D.C., office.

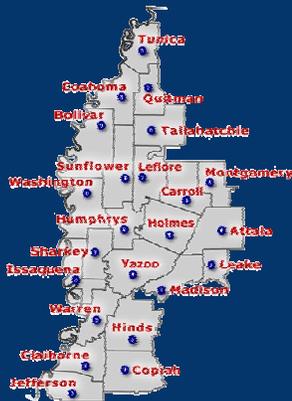


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Due to the recent ricin attack on the Washington, D.C., Capitol Complex, I am encouraging constituents to contact me via electronic mail, facsimile or telephone. Some postal mail has been destroyed and all other postal mail is severely delayed, as it is being examined at an off-site facility for the presence of biological and chemical agents such as anthrax and ricin.

*Please visit me on the Web at:
www.house.gov/thompson for more information on the Second District and to learn more about how I am working for you!*



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