



Congressman Mark Kirk's Northwest News



Tenth Congressional District

May 2006

Metra Expansion Will Reduce Traffic Gridlock

Congressman Mark Kirk helped secure \$135 million in federal funds to expand service on the North Central Rail Line. The congressman joined Metra executives

to help reduce gridlock on the Kennedy Expressway and the Northwest Tollway by providing commuters in Arlington Heights, Vernon Hills, Mt. Prospect, Prospect Heights, Vernon Hills and Libertyville with connections downtown and to O'Hare. With additional trains, service to O'Hare and more flexible schedules, the number of new rail commuters will increase while traffic and air pollution decrease.

Congressman Kirk is working with local officials and Metra to add express trains to the North Central line's current schedule. The congressman requested a formal review between Metra and Canadian National Railroad by this month, setting a timeline for implementation of rush hour commuter service.

"Our North Central service is the first new American commuter rail line in over 50 years. Funding for this service is one of my proudest achievements in Congress and will improve quality of life for northern Illinois families."

Congressman Kirk

to dedicate the line's second track that doubled the number of trains serving many 10th District communities.

Metra's expanded service will



Congressman Kirk aboard Metra's newly double-tracked North Central Line, for which he secured \$135 million to expand the number of trains from 10 to 20 each day.

Navy-VA Hospital First of its Kind in Nation

Joined by top VA and Navy officials, Congressman Kirk revealed the site of the "first in the nation" joint Navy-VA Hospital. The new Navy hospital, fully integrated with the North Chicago Veterans Administration Medical Center, permanently secures high quality health care for veterans, sailors and their family members living in northern Illinois.

"By building the Navy's new hospital next to the VA, our northern Illinois veterans' hospital will never close," said

Congressman Kirk. "This is the closest partnership between the VA and military health care system in the country. Collaboration between the Navy and VA ensures the survival of veterans' healthcare in our community while upgrading medical care for sailors and veterans alike."

In October of 2003, Kirk won approval for the first stage of the integration, moving the Navy's mental health unit into the North Chicago VA. This blocked prior Administration plans to close our veterans' hospital.



Northern Illinois veterans joined Kirk and North Chicago Mayor Leon Rockingham at the signing of a joint VA-DoD agreement.

In November 2004, Kirk won approval for the second phase — a \$12 million expansion of surgery suites and emergency rooms. When this phase is complete next summer, four new

operating rooms and 14 new exam rooms will open for patient care. The third phase is the most ambitious — a \$110 million Navy hospital to be fully integrated with the VA.

New Traffic Control Center

Fiber Optics, Computers and Cameras Reduce Traffic Congestion

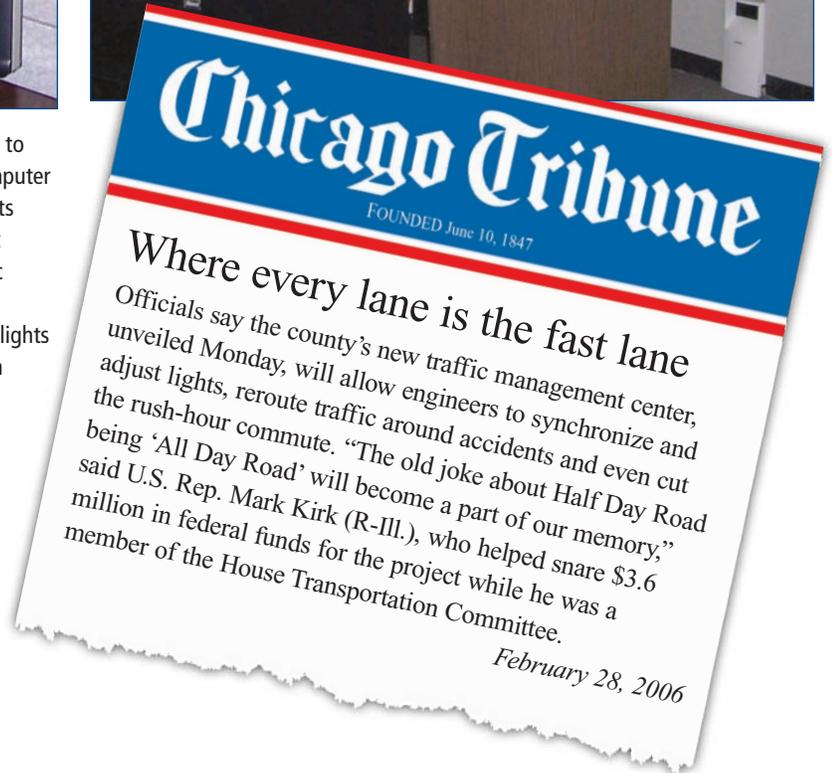
Congressman Kirk secured \$3.6 million in federal funding for the new Lake County Traffic Management Center located in Libertyville. The center will help reduce traffic gridlock using fiber optics, computers and cameras to control major stoplights in Lake County. The system will properly adjust stoplights for weather, time-of-day, season changes and accidents.



The management center has 150 Lake County traffic signals online. Several major intersections also have cameras so engineers can dispatch police and firefighters immediately after an accident occurs. The traffic center will not just reduce gridlock — it will also open “green light corridors” for ambulances to arrive on scene faster.

In March the center established a website to help commuters get real-time updates on traffic conditions (www.co.lake.il.us/dot). Next year, the center will add connections to thirty-one traffic signals and 44 cameras.

Congressman Kirk was on hand to open the new Lake County Computer Traffic Control Center, which puts northern Illinois at the forefront of technology in reducing traffic gridlock. The new computerized system will properly adjust stoplights for weather, time-of-day, season changes and accidents.



Support for WINGS Program

‘Women in Need Growing Stronger’

During a recent tour of the Women in Need Growing Stronger (WINGS) safe house, Congressman Kirk presented WINGS Executive Director, Rebecca Darr, with a \$200,000 check to enhance programs to protect wives and mothers from domestic violence. As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, Kirk secured the federal funding through the Department of Justice’s Assistance Grants program.

“Over four million American women are abused each year — nearly 20,000 of them, wives and

mothers from Chicago’s northwest suburbs. WINGS breaks the pattern of violence by protecting women and their children from abusers. Rebecca Darr and her team care for the victims and help them to develop new safe and independent lives.”

Congressman Kirk joined Rebecca Darr and Rita Canning for a tour of the program’s safe house and to present the organization with \$200,000 in federal support to enhance and expand their programs to protect abused women and their children.



Students thrive in Kirk's Laureate Program

Twenty-four gifted seventh grade students kicked off Congressman Kirk's Tenth District Laureates Program last fall with a day of laboratory work at the Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine. While at the University, students were able to participate in an anatomy lab with the opportunity to see, touch and work with real human organs. "You could actually feel the texture of them," said Christian Neumeister, 12, a seventh grader from Lake Forest. "I don't think that's something any book or computer could supply." The program, in its second year, provides highly-focused educational opportunities to gifted students from 12 middle schools in the Tenth District.



Remembering Our Veterans

Congressman Kirk awards WWII veteran and Waukegan resident Paul Eagon the bronze star, a medal he earned while fighting in Germany and Belgium.

SERVICE BY THE NUMBERS

(January 1, 2001-April 1, 2006)

141,554

Constituent Letters Answered

18

Medicare Town Hall Meetings

8,767

D.C. Tour & Ticket Assistance

487

Eagle Scout & Gold Award Recipients

985

U.S. Flag Requests

41

Weekends Spent on Reserve Duty

2,929

Votes in the 107th, 108th & 109th Congress
(Voting percentage 97%)

"Kids Against Mercury"

In March, Congressman Kirk met with a group of students from Elm Place School in Highland Park. The students are concerned about the alarming mercury levels in Lake Michigan and have formed a coalition to encourage local residents to seek action from their state legislators. "Kids Against Mercury" has put together a list of ways citizens can help. Here are a few suggestions:

- ✓ **Use less electricity.**
If we use less electricity, we will burn less coal and less mercury will be emitted into the air.
- ✓ **Urge your power company to include information about mercury emissions in their billing statements as a public service.**
- ✓ **Petition the State of Illinois to give power companies tax breaks for using renewable power sources.**
- ✓ **Consider boycotting products that contain mercury.**
Know what you are buying and what you are eating.
- ✓ **Tell your representatives that you support cuts in mercury emissions.**



I would like to hear your views on key issues we face in Congress.

To help me represent you better, please fill out the questionnaire below:

Protecting Our Kids

1. Congress is considering linking all state criminal and pedophile databases, permitting school districts to review national records before hiring teachers or coaches. Do you:
- Support this reform as a needed protection for children
 - Oppose this as potentially violating the rights of school job applicants
 - Do not know

Fuel Conservation

2. To reduce America's dependence on foreign oil, Congress is considering raising the Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards for all cars and trucks in America. Do you:
- Support this as a needed conservation measure
 - Oppose this as an unneeded burden on auto makers and unions
 - Do not know

401(Kids) Savings

3. Congress is considering establishing 401(Kids) tax-deferred savings accounts enabling parents to save for a child's college education, first-time home purchase or to start a business. Do you:
- Support the creation of 401(Kids) as a needed way to boost savings
 - Oppose this for budget deficit reasons
 - Do not know

Immigration Reform

4. Over 11 million people are in the United States, having entered illegally. With regard to illegal aliens living in the United States, do you support:
- Granting amnesty, allowing them to become U.S. citizens
 - Arresting them for deportation
 - I do not like either option
 - Do not know

Classroom Safety

5. Under current federal law, a teacher must show a specific suspicion before searching a student for a weapon or drugs. Congress is considering reforms to give very wide latitude to teachers to keep their classrooms drug and gun-free. With regard to this proposal, do you:
- Support giving teachers wider powers to search students without their permission
 - Oppose this proposal because it could violate the privacy rights of students
 - Do not know

Iraq

6. With regard to Iraq, which policy do you support:
- An immediate departure of all U.S. troops
 - Announcing a scheduled departure, regardless of what happens to the recently elected Iraqi government
 - Staying until the elected Iraqi government asks U.S. troops to leave
 - Do not know

Mercury Pollution

7. Studies show that Lake Michigan suffers from mercury pollution. Most of this pollution comes from coal-fired plants that produce electricity. Congress is considering mandating new pollution control equipment that could raise the cost of electricity. With regard to this proposal, do you:
- Support additional pollution controls, even if electricity rates rise
 - Oppose such controls because electricity already costs too much
 - Do not know

Prescription Drugs

8. The federal government recently offered seniors the option to add coverage for their prescription drugs to their Medicare Part A and B plans. About 55,000 seniors in the 10th Congressional District signed up for this coverage. With regard to the Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage, do you think Congress should:
- Implement Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage, working out problems as they arise
 - Scrap the plan all together as either too expensive or complicated
 - End all options for coverage and offer only one government plan
 - Do not know

Suburban Gangs

9. Gangs connected to international drug cartels are moving out of Chicago to the suburbs. There are over 3,000 documented gang members operating north of Lake-Cook Road. With regard to this problem, Congress is considering extending federal criminal jurisdiction against gang members in schools. What is your opinion?
- This reform would be an unwanted extension of federal law enforcement into local police jurisdictions
 - This reform is needed to support suburban police departments who are now fighting urban drug gangs
 - Do not know

National Security Agency

10. After September 11, the President authorized the National Security Agency (NSA) to expand its international wiretaps to also monitor people who had been contacted by terrorist groups inside the United States. With regard to this program, do you believe:
- The program should be stopped and the NSA should be banned from working in the United States
 - The program should be continued to monitor potential terrorists in the United States
 - Do not know

TO MAIL BACK:

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2. Fold top edge down to arrow.
3. Fold bottom third up to meet top fold.
4. Place tape at top opening to seal.
Be sure mailing address is showing.

ACROSS THE DISTRICT

Chicago Tribune

FOUNDED June 10, 1847

Kirk urges FDA to boost efforts

U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk on Monday called for the Food and Drug Administration to improve the government's safety net to keep mercury-contaminated seafood out of supermarkets. "We need the FDA to do more to protect American consumers from mercury poisoning from fish," Kirk wrote in a letter asking colleagues in the U.S. House to join his efforts.

December 13, 2005

Daily Herald

Kirk bill targets corruption

Republican U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk of Highland Park unveiled legislation Wednesday to strip members of Congress of their federal pensions if they are convicted of felonies like bribery, fraud and tax evasion.

December 15, 2005

Chicago Tribune

FOUNDED June 10, 1847

Editorial

... and keep the job honest

The Hurricane Katrina cleanup is in full swing and so is the gold-rush for federal contracts. So, what should be done to make sure the public isn't ripped off? A good second step was signaled by U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), who rounded up 25 of his Republican colleagues to write a letter to President Bush urging a quick return to open and competitive contracting to make sure taxpayers receive value for their money. "An overuse of sole-source, non-competitive contracts could threaten the integrity of the relief efforts and allow less public-minded contractors to divert resources from the people that need it most," the letter states.

September 17, 2005

Chicago Sun-Times

REGION'S BEST-READ NEWSPAPER

Repeal of GI gift caps going to Congress

Disturbed by a Pentagon policy that limits gifts to military members to \$20, U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk on Thursday garnered Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's support of legislation to exempt wounded soldiers from the cap. "Gifts from a grateful nation should not be limited to folded flags," said Kirk (R-Ill.), a Naval Reserve officer. "Within two weeks, this issue will be solved. So by the time we have a lot of gift-giving . . . whatever Army lawyer who announced this policy will be corrected by the United States Congress."

November 11, 2005

Write your return address here:

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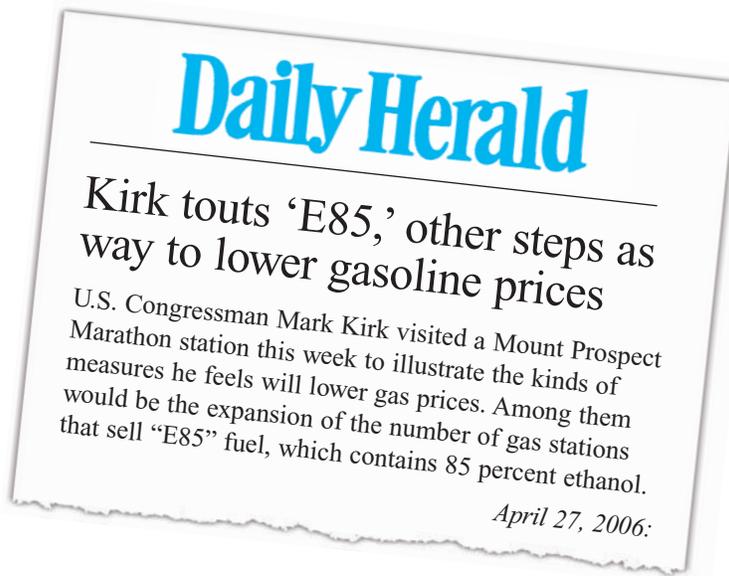
OFFICIAL BUSINESS:
Congressional Survey Enclosed

Kirk: Action Needed to Lower Gas Prices

With gas prices headed toward \$3.00 per gallon, Congressman Kirk outlined federal regulations and laws Congress should act on to ease gasoline costs:

- End monopolies on blended fuel by creating a nationwide standard and competitive pricing.
- Increase Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards from an average of 20.7 miles per gallon to 33 miles per gallon by 2014.
- Extend federal tax credits on purchases of hybrid vehicles.
- Expand the number of gasoline refineries.
- Provide incentives for production of alternative fuels like E85 – 85% ethanol and 15% gasoline.

Congressman Kirk meets with the press at a Marathon Gas Station in Mount Prospect, where E85 gasoline is selling 30 cents cheaper than regular unleaded gas.



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