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## WARES CREEK

In August of 2010, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) gave final approval to the Project Partnership Agreement to dredge Wares Creek in Bradenton, Florida. The ACOE Jacksonville District Commander, Colonel Alfred A. Pantano, Jr., signed the agreement just hours after the Manatee County Commissioners met to approve the agreement.

In 2007, I brought local, state and federal officials together to work on this project. The project had stalled for seven months until July of 2010, when I secured a commitment from the Commanding General of the ACOE Lieutenant General Robert L. "Van" Antwerp that the agreement would be "signed, sealed, and executed."

For decades, sediment build-up has caused flooding of Wares Creek, resulting in an average of \$6,700 in damages annually. This plan saves taxpayer dollars by reducing the average annual damages by at least 57 percent. Wares Creek residents have waited years for this project to move forward, and now we can prevent future flooding in this historic neighborhood.

## VETERANS CEMETERY

I am proud and honored to represent more than 90,000 veterans in the 13<sup>th</sup> district of Florida, as well as their families. In addition to making sure they receive the benefits they are due for their extraordinary service and sacrifice, I have also lead the charge for construction of a National Cemetery for veterans in Sarasota.

During my time on the House Veterans Affairs' Committee, I helped secure funds for the construction of the cemetery. Phase IA of the construction of the cemetery began in June of 2008 and the first burial took place in January.

Phase 1B of construction was scheduled for May of 2009 with a May 2011 completion date. Unfortunately, the Veterans Administration (VA) found that the contractors hired to carry out construction were did not meet qualifications, and consequently canceled the contract.

On September 7, 2010, I sent a letter to Veterans Administration Secretary Eric Shinseki asking he take action to ensure that construction of the VA Cemetery in Sarasota, Florida, get back on schedule.

As a result of my letter, a \$16 million contract was awarded by the VA for construction of Phase 1B, which then began in February of 2011. This phase should be completed by August 2012 and will add 11,500 crypt gravesites, 16,000 cremain sites, a public information center, two committal service shelters, and a memorial wall.

## **CHINESE DRYWALL**

For hundreds of Florida residents the American Dream of home ownership turned in to a nightmare when faulty Chinese drywall made their homes unliveable and unsellable.

I have worked hard to right this injustice that has been done to Florida homeowners. I became a member of the Congressional Drywall Caucus, which is involved in several efforts to deal with the crisis, including requesting emergency funding for the relevant federal agencies to perform necessary testing, urging cooperation between mortgage lenders and their customers to abate mortgage payments for affected homeowners, and the passage of legislation calling for a study on the impact of this issue on the greater issue of foreclosures.

I also authored legislation that passed the House to provide disaster assistance to homeowners whose primary residences are impacted by potentially toxic Chinese drywall.

In October of 2010, I hosted a Chinese Drywall forum in Sarasota to hear concerns and present findings to homeowners struggling to rid their properties of toxic drywall. I will continue to fight for Floridians who have been affected by defective Chinese Drywall.

## **PILL MILLS**

In Florida, 7 people die each day from prescription drug overdoses. Also in Florida, there are more pain management clinics than there are McDonalds restaurants. These two facts are not coincidence. Florida has become the nation's storefront for narcotics, tearing apart our families and communities. The 13<sup>th</sup> District is unfortunately no exception.

I introduced legislation to combat this prescription drug abuse epidemic and crack down on Florida's sprawling pill mill industry. My bill has achieved bipartisan support, with over fifty cosponsors, including six committee chairs.

"The Pill Mill Crackdown Act of 2011," H.R. 1065, includes provisions to: support state-based prescription drug monitoring programs; use the money from seized illicit operations for DEA investigations and drug treatment programs; strengthen prescription standards for certain addictive pain drugs; and toughen prison terms and fines for pill mill operators.

I will continue to work with state and local leaders to rid our state of prescription drug abuse.

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## **HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS**

Hurricanes are an unfortunate danger that Florida coast residents must be prepared for. The information and links below are meant to help you prepare yourself and your family, should a hurricane approach our district. In addition to what is provided here, I encourage you to seek additional information and resources so that you and your family are safe and ready if a hurricane hits Florida.

### **PREPARING FOR HURRICANES:**

- Familiarize yourself with the terms that are used to identify a hurricane:
- A hurricane watch means a hurricane is possible in your area. Be prepared to evacuate.
- A hurricane warning is when a hurricane is expected in your area. If local authorities advise you to evacuate, leave immediately.
- Prepare yourself and your property:
- Cover all of your homes' windows with pre-cut ply wood or hurricane shutters.
- If you have a car, fill the gas tank in case you have to evacuate.
- Make an evacuation plan for yourself and your family. Make sure everyone knows where to go and what to do.
- Prepare an emergency supply kit for yourself and your family.
- Have an evacuation supply kit packed in case you have to leave your home.

- Plan how you will care for your pets.

### **IF YOU MUST EVACUATE:**

- Turn off water, gas and electricity when you leave your house. Lock the door behind you.
- Bring important papers such as birth certificates and marriage licenses.

### **RECOMMENDED ITEMS TO INCLUDE IN A BASIC EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT:**

- One gallon of water per person per day for at least three days
- Three-day supply of non-perishable food and can-opener
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio
- Flashlight
- Extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask, to help filter contaminated air
- Moist towelettes and garbage bags for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities

### **HELPFUL FLORIDA LINKS:**

State of Florida Hurricane Guide: [www.floridadisaster.org](http://www.floridadisaster.org)

Sarasota County Emergency Guide: <http://www.co.sarasota.fl.us/emergencyservices/allhazards.asp>

Charlotte County Emergency Guide: [www.charlottecountyfl.com/emergency](http://www.charlottecountyfl.com/emergency)

DeSoto County Emergency Guide: <http://co.desoto.fl.us/index.php/emergencymanagement/hurricane>

Hardee County Emergency Guide: <http://www.hardeecounty.net/eoc/>

Manatee County Emergency Guide: <http://www.mymanatee.org/home/government/departments/public-safety/hurricane-readiness-center.html>

### **HELPFUL FEDERAL LINKS:**

National Weather Forecast Office: <http://www.weather.gov/>

National Hurricane Center: <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>

NOAA Weather Radio: <http://www.weather.gov/nwr/>

Federal Emergency Management Agency (1-800-621-FEMA): <http://www.fema.gov/>

FCC – Emergency Alert System: <http://transition.fcc.gov/pshs/services/eas/>