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Jason Smith's Capitol Report - Friday, November 27, 2015

DECEMBER 01ST 2015 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Congressman Jason Smith Capitol Report: Giving Thanks November 27, 2015

“The year that is drawing toward its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies.” - Abraham Lincoln, 1863 Thanksgiving proclamation

Despite the fruitful fields, America was divided. We were in the middle of the Civil War and President Lincoln’s words were needed to unite us in country and spirit. That Thanksgiving, President Lincoln prayed for “the Almighty hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it, as soon as may be consistent with the divine purposes, to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility, and union.”

At a time when the news is filled with stories of division and anger, of hurt and discontent, it was especially important to gather this Thanksgiving and be thankful for the many blessings that sustain us. As I have done every year since childhood, I was lucky enough to spend this time with my family. Whether first hosted by my grandmother or eventually my mother, Thanksgiving for me has always been a day filled with eating, playing games and enjoying the company of family until well after midnight. This year was no different and I enjoyed every minute of spending time with those that I love. It

was also a time to reflect and continue to give thanks to God for our freedom, for the brave men and women who fight so valiantly to preserve it, for the health and well-being of my family, and for the community that we are all so fortunate to call home.

Our area is one of the most generous places in the country, and at no time is that more evident than during the holiday season. On Thanksgiving Day, beyond the parades, stuffing, and football, churches like The Missing Peace Church in Park Hills and the First Baptist Church in West Plains were looking after those in need by providing free turkey dinners with all the trimmings to anyone who visited. Volunteers at Shared Blessings Homeless Shelter in Bonne Terre were hand-delivering 1,000 meals to those in the community. And with Christmas right around the corner, Jefferson Elementary School Student Santas are already preparing to host 300 people for a Christmas dinner in Cape Girardeau. These are just some of the hundreds of examples around our great district of individuals and organizations working this time of year to help families put food on the table and toys under the tree. It is an inspiring reminder of the sense of community we have right here at home.

This year, as in years past, our offices will be participating in local food drives to help those in need. Offices in Cape Girardeau, Farmington, Poplar Bluff, Rolla, and West Plains will serve as drop off points for different food collections going on in their communities this holiday season. Please stop by any of those offices if you would like to make a donation.

Let us always, with one heart and one voice, share our blessings and serve our neighbors; it is the true meaning of the season.

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