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The Fort Morgan Times

Much pork in spending bill

Pork continues to be served in lavish proportions from the halls of Congress.

Earlier this month the House passed what is called the Consolidated Appropriations Act. It consists of seven of the 13 spending bills which must be passed as part of the annual appropriations process. That process, by the way, is far from completed with the Senate not expected to act on this particular bill until Jan. 20 — and the government is already nearly three months into the new fiscal year.

The total cost of the Consolidated Appropriations Act is \$820 billion, and as 4th Congressional District Rep. Marilyn Musgrave of Fort Morgan points out, it contains \$328 billion in new discretionary spending.

Musgrave voted against the bill because of the vast amount of pork barrel spending included in it — and understandably so. As she said, "The congressional spending spree of the past few years is well documented, and, unfortunately, this year promises to be no different."

Musgrave said the bill contains more than 10,000 spending earmarks, often referred to as "pork-barrel spending," and she listed a few of these items such as:

- \$325,000 for construction of a swimming pool for Salinas, Calif.
- \$210,000 for construction of a sidewalk in Thomaston, Maine.
- \$175,000 for painting a mural in Cape Girardeau, Mo.
- \$90,000 for olive fruit fly research in Montpellier, France.
- \$800,000 for trolley buses in West Palm Beach, Fla.

- \$225,000 for a Civil War theme park.

Also adding its voice to those opposed to these pork-barrel projects is the organization known as Citizens Against Government Waste. This group adds to the list of pork in the bill:

- \$50,000 for an indoor rain forest in Coralville, Iowa.
- \$1 million for the Alaska SeaLife Center.
- \$653,000 to study rainbow trout at a University of Idaho experiment station in Aberdeen.
- \$500,000 for a Samoan Asian Pacific Job Training Program for the Hawaii Community Foundation.
- \$500,000 for the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay to establish a paper science technology transfer center.
- \$270,000 for cotton quality in Clemson, S.C.
- \$200,000 for construction and renovation of the Guadalupe, Ariz., Mercado Shopping Center.
- \$200,000 for the University of Hawaii to produce a film documentary.
- \$150,000 for the Fairbanks, Alaska, Summer Arts Festival.
- \$75,000 for renovation of a YMCA in North Hollywood, Calif.

It is sad, indeed, when the government faces hundreds of billions of dollars in debt that our leaders cannot put the brakes on such ridiculous, selfish spending. It simply adds to the burden of debt all taxpayers must bear — much of which will be passed on to our children if we don't bring it under control.

But as many members of Congress must feel, if they can add a little pork to the spending barrel for their home districts, they are buying the votes they'll need in the next election to stay in Washington.

It's a vicious but unending circle.