

Charlotte Sun: Mahoney talks economic growth

Congressman Discusses Support for Stimulus Plan

By Bob Fliss

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PUNTA GORDA - Congressman Tim Mahoney was back in Charlotte County Friday, fresh from supporting the economic stimulus plan that will be putting rebates of \$600 or more into the pockets of millions of taxpayers by late spring.

toward the wealthy. It's targeted toward people who will take the money and put it back into the economy," Mahoney said. "Basically, it's targeted to people with kids and families."

market. Currently, federally guaranteed mortgages - including those backed by Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae - go only as high as \$417,000. Mahoney noted that \$417,000 buys a nice house in Charlotte County, but barely gets you into the market in his Palm Beach County base. An increase in the ceiling, perhaps as high as \$700,000, would go a long way toward restoring confidence among potential homebuyers.

\$3.7 billion for the Department of Veterans Affairs has been released by President Bush. When the \$3.7 billion is added to other new money approved by Congress during 2007, the Department of Veterans Affairs stands to get another \$6.7 billion, mainly for health care. This is supposed to be the largest funding increase in the 77-year history of the department. "Now is the time, more than ever, that we need to respect our veterans," Mahoney, D-16th, told a crowd of about 70 veterans and family members, who gathered outside the museum's gallery at Fishermen's Village.

programs that survived the latest version of the federal budget. He later met with representatives of local businesses and nonprofit organizations in Punta Gorda.

campus President Patricia Land and other administrators.

bioenergy." He expects to introduce a bill by early summer in the House Financial Services Committee.

investment into alternative fuels. Mahoney said he's still trying to resolve some basic questions - for example, he envisions the organization as dealing only with ethanol, but would not at this early date rule out other alternative energy technologies.

the energy bill recently passed by Congress, which mandates that petroleum companies purchase 100 million gallons of cellulosic ethanol in 2008, with a rising target in future years.

However, "I don't think that at some point in the future you are going to need to mandate people using ethanol," Mahoney added. Ethanol will come into its own as a fuel when scientists perfect techniques for fermenting vegetable matter that currently has little economic value.