

# Your mail: Merit system doesn't always work

The Town Talk  
April 21, 2008

A recent article by Town Talk reporter R.T. Morgan, "Cenla losing \$750,000 in workforce training funds," revealed a profound truth about the federal government's budget process that many are reluctant to accept: The merit system does not always work.

In reporting the federal budget's cutting \$750,000 in workforce training in Central Louisiana - cuts to successful, effective programs such as Local Workforce Investment Area in Rapides

Parish - Mr. Morgan, perhaps unintentionally, set up a valid argument for continuing another federal funding mechanism many often criticize, earmarking.

In the specific case of workforce training for Central Louisiana, earmarks may not fully restore funding but they can greatly alleviate budget cuts. For example, last year I secured a \$195,000 earmark for the Rapides Parish Career Solution Center through the fiscal year 2008 Labor, Health, and Human Services Appropriations bill.

As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I stand by the prac-

tice of earmarking as a means of securing federal funding for regional projects that may otherwise be dismissed by the merit system and bureaucrats in Washington who do not understand the needs of our district.

While the merit system continues to work in some cases, Mr. Morgan's article served as a reminder that there is a need for earmarks in some circumstances, specifically in the 5th Congressional District of Louisiana.

**U.S. Rep. Rodney Alexander  
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