

LARSON WEB SITE NAMED ONE OF BEST ON CAPITOL HILL

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WASHINGTON, D.C. U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) today was identified in a non-partisan, independent study as having one of the best Web sites in Congress. The site (www.house.gov/larson) received a Congress Online Gold Mouse Award from the Congress Online Project, a joint research project of the Congressional Management Foundation and the George Washington University, funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts.

Larson's site was noted for explaining what Members of Congress and their offices do and helping constituents understand the work of Congress. The report stated: "His issues pages go beyond the usual rhetoric sometimes found on congressional sites and addresses questions such as 'What is the problem?' and 'How can we fix it?'" It also stated: "Follow the example of Rep. John Larson (D-CT) and let your content be the focus of your pages."

Larson stated: "I'm very pleased to receive this award. I view my Web site as an extension of my offices, available to my constituents at anytime from anywhere. I would like to congratulate Brian Mahar from my staff for an outstanding job in leading the effort to make this site a resource for the people of the First Congressional District and I anticipate even further improvements during the coming year."

The study evaluated 610 Web sites in Congress -- all Member office, committee and leadership sites -- to determine which sites were the best and to assess how well Congress was using the Internet to communicate with the public. This research is the second annual report to combine a comprehensive analysis and grading of all congressional Web sites. Larson's site was one of seventy-five sites to be awarded and one of only sixteen sites to receive the highest ranking.

The report is designed to both critique current Web site practices and provide a blueprint for congressional offices that wish to improve their Web sites. The Web sites were graded from August through November of 2002 using five criteria essential to good congressional Web sites: audience, content, interactivity, usability, and innovations. The research included multiple reviews of the sites by the project team and an independent panel, interviews with congressional staff, and available studies on best practices in Web sites.

CMF is a nonprofit, nonpartisan education organization devoted to promoting a more effective Congress. The George Washington University, through its Graduate School of Political Management (GSPM), is conducting a series of studies on the impact of Internet and electronic communications on American democracy. The Pew Charitable Trusts support

nonprofit activities in the areas of culture, education, the environment, health and human services, public policy and religion.

The complete list of the Congress Online Gold, Silver, and Bronze Mouse Award winners is available in the report: www.congressonlineproject.org/webstudy2003.html.

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