

## Congressman John Larson's Web site Wins 2006 Gold Mouse Award

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615 House and Senate Web sites Examined in 2006 Gold Mouse Report

WASHINGTON, DC – The Web site of Congressman John B. Larson was honored today by the Congressional Management Foundation, a non-profit, non-partisan management consulting and research organization in Washington, D.C., for being one of the best in Congress. The site, [www.house.gov/larson](http://www.house.gov/larson), was one of 615 evaluated in The 2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill, which analyzed congressional Web sites including those of all Senate and House Members, committees (both majority and minority sites), and official leadership sites. Eighty-five Web sites were cited in 2006, with 18 winning Gold, 27 winning Silver, and 40 winning Bronze Mouse Awards.

"I am very pleased to have won this award for the second time," said Congressman Larson. "The internet is a critical way to communicate with my constituents. I am always looking for ways to improve the access to information about what I am doing in Washington and how I can better serve my constituents," added Larson.

The Gold Mouse Report and Awards are part of the Congressional Management Foundation's broader research project, "Connecting to Congress," funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation. For this project CMF partnered with researchers from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, University of California-Riverside and Ohio State University to study how Members of Congress can use the Internet to improve communications with their constituents and to promote greater participation in the legislative process.

"One of the key purposes of the awards is to highlight best practices so offices can improve their sites by learning from those doing a good job," said Beverly Bell, executive director of the Congressional Management Foundation. "Web sites that garnered an Award in 2006 illustrate the best practices that we hope can serve as examples for others to follow."

"Congressman Larson's Web site shows that he has identified the needs of his various constituencies and has developed easily accessible content that meets their needs online," said Bell. "Congressman Larson is to be congratulated for being among the best of the best Web sites on Capitol Hill, and the Congressional Management Foundation is pleased to present Congressman Larson with the 2006 Gold Mouse Award."

The 2006 report shows that Web sites are an increasingly critical channel through which Members communicate to, and hear from, constituents. In a time when people can do everything online from renewing their driver licenses to paying their taxes, they understandably expect to find information on the Web about legislation and congressional assistance with federal agencies, as well as the opportunity to communicate their own views, Bell said.

Web sites were graded on how well they incorporate five basic building blocks that extensive research has identified as critical for effectiveness: audience, content, usability, interactivity, and innovation. Using these building blocks, an evaluation framework was developed by CMF and their research partners at Harvard, Ohio State, and the University of California-Riverside that would be fair and objective, while still taking into account important qualitative factors that affect a visitor's experience on a Web site.

CMF will be assessing congressional Web sites again in 2007. All House and Senate Member, committee and leadership Web sites will be evaluated during the summer of 2007 and another report is expected to be released by the end of the year.

A full copy of the report, the 2006 Gold Mouse Report: Recognizing the Best Web Sites on Capitol Hill, is available on the Congressional Management Foundation's Web site at [www.cmfweb.org](http://www.cmfweb.org).

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