

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving and didn't eat too much!!

I traveled to San Francisco in early November for the annual National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation IBES Conference. This conference always has some excellent speakers and it is always interesting to go and meet new people from cooperatives around the country and get new perspectives on how things are done.

The speakers this year included Mike Rowe from the Dirty Jobs TV show. Condoleezza Rice who was Secretary of State under President George W. Bush. Arie Fleischer who was the Press Secretary for President George W. Bush. Clint Hill who at one time was the Assistant Director of the U.S Secret Service and who served as protection for President Eisenhower, President John F. Kennedy, President Lynden Johnson, President Richard Nixon and President Gerald Ford. Clint Hill will forever be known as the Secret Service agent who ran and jumped onto the back of President John F. Kennedy's vehicle in the moments after JFK was shot. His presentation was moving and fascinating. The final speaker on the last day was Navy Seal Robert O'Neil. Mr. O'Neil's claim to fame is he is the one who killed Osama bin laden. Robert O'Neil's speech was fascinating as well.

After San Francisco, Funa and I traveled to Panama City, Florida where our son Chester is stationed in the Air Force. I got to meet our Grandson Roland who I had not met before except on Skype. We spent Thanksgiving there and left to come back home on the 27th of November.

All this traveling made me sincerely thankful for the place that we are blessed to live in.

In San Francisco we encountered traffic like I have never seen before. I had no idea there were that many cars in the whole world. The airline terminals are so crowded it is just incredible. I think the Atlanta Hartsfield Terminal had more people in it than the entire Anchorage population. While Funa and I were waiting for our flight to Kansas City we googled the Atlanta Hartsfield terminal and learned that more than 260,000 people a day go through that place.

Panama City was wonderful. It is a small city much like Anchorage. It has beautiful beaches and oysters on the half shell for 9 bucks a dozen. It is hard to beat that, BUT it is even harder to beat the area we live in. We have clean water, clean air and everyone knows everyone else. If someone has a problem on the road we stop to help without worries of being mugged or worse.

Thanks for being an INNEC member and thanks for making our little spot in paradise a great place to live.

Merry Christmas and Happy New year!!