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Only New Jersey Member Of Congress To Receive Award From Non-Partisan Group

Washington, DC - Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) today was identified in a nonpartisan, independent study as having one of the best websites in Congress. Rothman, whose website is www.house.gov/rothman had the only site among New Jersey Members of Congress to be recognized. Congressman Rothman's office received a Congress Online Silver Mouse Award from the Congress Online Project, a joint research initiative of the Congressional Management Foundation and George Washington University.

"I am honored to have received the Congress Online Silver Mouse Award in recognition of my website. The website is designed to let my constituents know what I am working on in Congress on their behalf, and to assist them with cutting through government's bureaucratic red tape," said Rothman, who unveiled his redesigned website in June 2002. "The great thing about the website is that it is still advancing and growing with more information to better serve the people of New Jersey, and in particular the people of my District in Bergen, Hudson, and Passaic Counties. I will continuously be adding new information and making improvements in response to the needs and suggestions of my constituents."

In explaining why Rothman was chosen to receive the Silver Mouse Award, the report noted that, "Many congressional sites are finding creative ways to be more helpful to their online visitors and Rep. Steve Rothman's site is one of them. For reporters, Rep. Rothman's site includes a "media kit" with downloadable high-resolution photos and press releases organized by date and topic. For constituents, his "Working For District 9" section gives information on New Jersey-related accomplishments. And for kids, the site offers a special Web-based form that encourages them to "ask Steve" their questions."

The study evaluated 610 websites in Congress - all Member offices as well as 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. The websites were graded using five criteria essential to good congressional websites: audience, content, interactivity, usability, and innovations. The research included multiple reviews of the sites by the project team and an independent panel, as well as interviews with congressional staff.

"Whether someone wants to read up-to-date news releases to see what I am working on, needs help with a federal agency, or wants to learn more about legislation, I am confident that they will find what they need on my website," Rothman said. "The Internet is a powerful tool that allows me to communicate with my constituents 24 hours a day, 365 days a year."

The Congressional Management Foundation is a nonprofit, nonpartisan education organization devoted to promoting a more effective Congress. The George Washington University, through its Graduate School of Political Management, is conducting a series of studies on the impact of Internet and electronic communications on American democracy. The Pew Charitable Trusts, which funded the study, supports nonprofit activities in the areas of culture, education, the environment, health and human services, public policy and religion.

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