

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 344

WHEREAS, Many citizens of Van Zandt County have come to the State Capitol on March 9, 2005, to celebrate the significant part they and their forebears have played in the development of the Lone Star State; and

WHEREAS, Created by an Act of the Texas Legislature on March 20, 1847, this Northeast Texas county was named for Isaac Van Zandt, a Republic of Texas lawyer, legislator, and diplomat; and

WHEREAS, Canton, the county seat, was laid out in 1850 and incorporated in 1919; recently named a Main Street City, it is home to the Van Zandt County Fair and First Monday Trade Days, one of the country's best-known flea markets; a library of genealogy and local history is also a popular attraction and preserves much of the county's notable heritage; and

WHEREAS, The development of this fascinating area can be traced in a number of other communities as well; Edgewood, settled in the 1840s, boasts the Edgewood Heritage Park Museum, a facility dedicated to the preservation of the rural culture and architectural history of our state; and

WHEREAS, Edom, established in 1856, is one of the oldest towns in the county, and its past is highlighted by 10 state historical markers, many of them researched by members of the Edom Historical Society; the residents of this small community also give vital support to an active civic theater; and

WHEREAS, Fruit cultivation prompted the naming of Fruitvale, where a nursery operated as early as the 1870s; several generations in this century-old town have treasured the Randall Store, a local institution since 1910; and

WHEREAS, Grand Saline, originally called Jordan's Saline, the first Van Zandt County seat, takes its name from an immense dome of pure salt lying beneath the city; more than a mile and a half wide and 20,000 feet thick, the deposit is presently mined by Morton Salt Company; the city celebrates salt with an annual Salt Festival; those exploring this 2004 Main Street City can tour the Salt Palace Museum, a unique structure built with rock salt crystal, stop by the historical marker that commemorates native son Wiley Post, the renowned pioneer aviator, and visit the new Veterans Memorial Wall Park, featuring a genuine United States Army tank; and

WHEREAS, Van, established in 1891, remained a quiet farming community until 1929, when the discovery of oil nearby transformed the village into a boomtown; the Van Area Oil and Historical Museum recaptures the excitement of that frenetic time and commemorates the discovery with an annual Oil Festival; and

WHEREAS, Wills Point, settled in 1873 and originally known as Iola, was renamed for William Wills, whose cabin served as a stopping place for those traveling between Shreveport and Dallas; the Wills cabin still stands, as does the Texas and Pacific Railroad depot, which houses the Historical Society Museum; Wills Point, which is officially the Bluebird Capital of Texas, hosts the annual Bluebird Festival; and

WHEREAS, Ben Wheeler, surrounded by natural springs and rich farmland, was named for Van Zandt County's first mail carrier, Benjamin R. Wheeler, in 1876; and

WHEREAS, Martins Mill, which got its name from Dan R. Martin's gristmill, was established in 1880 and is home to one of the largest dairies in East Texas; the community survived destruction by tornadoes and fires and today boasts a successful school district; and

WHEREAS, Major events in the county include the Texas State Bluegrass Festival, the Edom Arts Fair, and the Van Zandt County Relay for Life; for the outdoor enthusiast, the Neches and Sabine Rivers, Purdis Creek State Park, and Lake Tawakoni State Park offer wonderful opportunities for fishing, boating, swimming, and camping; and

WHEREAS, The home of nearly 50,000 people, Van Zandt County relies on tourism, oil, and agribusiness; the area is a major producer of hay, blueberries, sweet potatoes, and nursery crops, in addition to cattle, horses, hogs, and dairy products; and

WHEREAS, Present with us today in the Capitol are numerous residents of Van Zandt County, including the Van Zandt County Choir, city and county officials, members of Vision 2005, and members of the board of the Council of Van Zandt County Communities, the sponsors of the biennial visit to the state legislature that provides an occasion for focusing on legislation affecting Van Zandt County citizens; and

WHEREAS, The citizens of Van Zandt County take justifiable pride in the hard work and ready cooperation that have made their county strong, and it is a pleasure to join them in honoring the county they call home; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 79th Legislature, hereby recognize March 9, 2005, as Van Zandt County Day at the State Capitol and extend sincere best wishes to the visiting Van Zandt residents for an informative and memorable day.

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President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on March 9, 2005.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate