1-6   HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1-7   WHEREAS, Industry, in northwest Austin County, enjoys the
1-8   distinction of being the oldest permanent German settlement in the
1-9   State of Texas; and
1-10   WHEREAS, The community dates to 1831 and owes its founding to
1-11   Johann Friedrich Ernst and his family, who emigrated from Oldenburg
1-12   to New York City in 1829; the Ernst family ran a boarding house in
1-13   New York for several years before deciding to relocate to Missouri
1-14   with a friend, Charles Fordtran; in the course of their move,
1-15   however, they read a prospectus about Stephen F. Austin's colony in
1-16   Texas and decided to make that their destination instead; and
1-17   WHEREAS, On April 16, 1831, Mr. Ernst was granted a league of
1-18   land on the west bank of the west fork of Mill Creek in Austin's
1-19   colony, 28 miles northwest of San Felipe; Friedrich Ernst, his
1-20   wife, and their children thus became the first German family to
1-21   settle in Texas; and
1-22   WHEREAS, Pleased with his new home, Mr. Ernst wrote a long
1-23   letter in February 1832 to a friend in Germany, extolling its
1-24   virtues; the letter was subsequently published in various Oldenburg
1-25   newspapers and inspired a number of other Germans to pack their bags
1-26   for Texas; and
1-27   WHEREAS, Friedrich Ernst gave a generous welcome to those who
1-28   found their way to his door, thereby earning the nickname "father of
1-29   German immigrants"; in addition to providing lodging in his home,
1-30   which served as a hotel and boarding house, he extended financial
1-31   assistance to fellow newcomers, some of whom settled nearby; in
1-32   1837 the young community received a post office, and the following
1-33   year Mr. Ernst formally laid out a town on his league; and
1-34   WHEREAS, The settlement took the name of Industry, possibly
1-35   because of the residents' reputation for hard work or because of the
1-36   cigar-making enterprise that Mr. Ernst established there, using
1-37   tobacco that he grew; and
1-38   WHEREAS, Louis C. Ervendberg, who served as a pastor in
1-39   Industry and the surrounding area, and Dr. Joseph Anton Fischer
1-40   established the first school in Industry in 1840-1841; in 1842, 37
1-41   local residents petitioned the Texas Congress for the creation of
1-42   an educational institute, Hermann's University, and a charter was
1-43   granted for the school in 1844, though the project was never
1-44   realized; and
1-45   WHEREAS, From the 1850s to the 1890s, the area around
1-46   Industry was increasingly populated by Germans, Czechs, and African
1-47   Americans; the economy centered on farming and cotton production
1-48   until the mid-19th century, when ranching began to predominate; and
1-49   WHEREAS, Today, a historic post office, a memorial park
1-50   created on land that once belonged to the Ernst family, and an
1-51   active historical society are among the focal points of community
1-52   life; the town supports a library and several churches, among them a
1-53   United Methodist congregation whose building, erected in 1867, is a
1-54   Recorded Texas Historic Landmark; other historical markers are
1-55   scattered throughout the area, and historical accounts of Industry
1-56   have been collected in a published volume; and
1-57   WHEREAS, Industry enjoys an exceptional heritage and a place
1-58   of honor in the annals of our state, and it is fitting that its
1-59   position as the first German settlement in Texas be appropriately
1-60   honored; now, therefore, be it
1-61   RESOLVED, That the 80th Legislature of the State of Texas
1-62   hereby officially designate Industry as the Oldest German
1-63   Settlement in the Lone Star State.

1-64   * * * * *