R E S O L U T I O N

1   WHEREAS, Proud citizens of Matagorda County are gathering in

2   Austin to celebrate Matagorda County Day at the State Capitol on

3   March 13, 2007; and

4   WHEREAS, The Karankawa were living in this region of prairie,

5   beaches, salt marshes, and coastal waterways when the first

6   European explorers arrived in the 16th century; there were

7   unsuccessful efforts at establishing a colony, and the famous

8   French explorer La Salle's last expedition came to an unhappy end

9   along the coast in the area in 1686, when his ship *La Belle* sank and

10   he was murdered by his own men; and

11   WHEREAS, Anglo-Americans began arriving in the early 1820s,

12   and the town of Matagorda was founded in 1829 once Stephen F. Austin

13   had convinced the Mexican government that a military post was

14   needed to protect incoming settlers; and

15   WHEREAS, Following the Texas Revolution, Matagorda County

16   was one of the first 23 counties established by the Republic of

17   Texas; it was named for the Spanish word for "thick brush," after

18   the dense canebrakes along the shore of the region; Matagorda was

19   named the county seat and became not only a major seaport but also

20   an important port of entry for people coming to Texas; and

21   WHEREAS, Livestock, cotton, and sugar were the foundations of

22   the county's economy in the early years; after the boll weevil

23   weakened the cotton crop in the early 1900s, many farmers turned to

24   the cultivation of rice; the economy was further diversified by the

1   discovery of oil and sulphur in the early 20th century; and

2   WHEREAS, Today turfgrass, cattle, cotton, rice, sorghum,

3   corn, and seafood are all mainstays of the county's livelihood;

4   petroleum and petrochemical operations also remain essential, and

5   the county is home to the twin reactors of the South Texas Nuclear

6   Project; and

7   WHEREAS, Bay City, which became county seat in 1894, is a

8   thriving center of petroleum and chemical operations, commercial

9   fishing, and tourism; the Matagorda County Birding and Nature

10   Center spans 34 acres along the Colorado River with nature trails,

11   gardens, and boardwalks, and is an excellent introduction to the

12   natural wonders of the county; and

13   WHEREAS, Palacios is home to over 300 commercial shrimping

14   boats, which bring in an annual harvest of over 15 million pounds,

15   making the city second among Texas fishing ports and 13th

16   nationwide; the recovery of La Salle's lost ship *La Belle* from

17   Matagorda Bay in 1997 is one of the most important archaeological

18   finds in North America; artifacts from the ship are on display in

19   the Palacios Area Museum, and a half-scale replica of the ship

20   called *La Petite Belle* can be seen at the South Bay Marina; and

21   WHEREAS, As the southern end of the Central Flyway, one of the

22   nation's four main migratory bird routes, the county has become a

23   mecca for birders; such prime birding sites as Big Boggy National

24   Wildlife Refuge, the Matagorda Bay Nature Park, the Mad Island

25   Wildlife Management Area, and the Nature Conservancy Clive Runnells

26   Family Mad Island Marsh Preserve draw bird-watchers from all over

27   the world; birders in Mad Island Marsh have counted the highest

1   number of bird species in North America for eight years in a row

2   during the annual Christmas Bird Count; and

3   WHEREAS, Blessed with abundant wildlife, scenic wonders, and

4   natural   resources,   Matagorda   County   offers   a   plethora   of

5   opportunities for residents and visitors alike; its long, colorful

6   history as one of the oldest regions of the Lone Star State is

7   matched only by its potential for a bright future; now, therefore,

8   be it

9   RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 80th Texas

10 Legislature hereby recognize March 13, 2007, as Matagorda County

11 Day at the State Capitol and extend to the visiting delegation best

12 wishes for an enjoyable stay in Austin.

                                                                    O'Day

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Speaker of the House

I certify that H.R. No. 747 was adopted by the House on March 13, 2007, by a non-record vote.

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Chief Clerk of the House