

1-1 By: Kolkhorst (Senate Sponsor - Hegar) H.C.R. No. 71  
1-2 (In the Senate - Received from the House April 22, 2009;  
1-3 May 6, 2009, read first time and referred to Committee on  
1-4 Government Organization; May 20, 2009, reported favorably by the  
1-5 following vote: Yeas 6, Nays 0; May 20, 2009, sent to printer.)

1-6 HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1-7 WHEREAS, The State of Texas has customarily recognized a  
1-8 variety of official state symbols as tangible representations of  
1-9 the state's historical and cultural heritage; and

1-10 WHEREAS, The Burton Cotton Gin & Museum, in Burton,  
1-11 Washington County, is home to what is believed to be the only  
1-12 restored gin of its time period in the United States that remains in  
1-13 its original building, on its original site, and that operates with  
1-14 equipment that was in the facility when the gin closed; beyond its  
1-15 uniqueness, this plant represents a significant chapter in Texas  
1-16 agricultural and economic history; and

1-17 WHEREAS, First grown in Texas by Spanish missionaries, cotton  
1-18 became an important source of income in the state in the 19th  
1-19 century and has remained a significant part of the state's economy;  
1-20 Texas has led the nation in cotton production in almost every year  
1-21 since 1880, and the state's annual cotton harvest today constitutes  
1-22 approximately a quarter of all the cotton raised in the United  
1-23 States; the largest cash crop in Texas, cotton has been designated  
1-24 the official State Fiber and Fabric; and

1-25 WHEREAS, Beginning in the 1870s, cotton culture in Texas  
1-26 expanded dramatically: between 1869 and 1879, the number of bales  
1-27 produced in the state rose from approximately 350,000 to more than  
1-28 800,000, and by 1900 the number of bales reached more than 3.5  
1-29 million; this soaring volume placed a heavy strain on the existing  
1-30 gins and their mode of operation; even if steam engines were used  
1-31 instead of animals to power the gin machinery, manual labor was  
1-32 still needed to shift the cotton from one operation to another, and  
1-33 as cotton harvests increased, impatient farmers were forced to wait  
1-34 in ever longer lines at the gin; and

1-35 WHEREAS, To cope with the upsurge in production, Robert S.  
1-36 Munger, of Mexia, devised a radically new process that became known  
1-37 as system ginning; over the period from 1883 to 1892, he created  
1-38 pneumatic technology that would move the cotton in a continuous  
1-39 manner, directly from the wagon to the gin stand and then to the  
1-40 baling press; modern-day cotton gins still use the process that he  
1-41 pioneered; and

1-42 WHEREAS, Though highly successful, Mr. Munger's technology  
1-43 was too expensive for a single individual to install, and so local  
1-44 farmers would establish associations to build system gins; in 1913,  
1-45 a group of Burton agriculturists, most of them German Texans,  
1-46 incorporated to construct and operate the Burton Farmers Gin;  
1-47 designed by the Lummus Cotton Gin Company, the gin relied on Mr.  
1-48 Munger's pneumatic system, together with special air-blast  
1-49 equipment to doff lint from the gin saws; and

1-50 WHEREAS, During the 1920s, the mechanization of cotton  
1-51 harvesting necessitated the addition of still further machinery at  
1-52 the Burton gin, in order to remove the increased volume of trash  
1-53 from the seed cotton; the total power requirement then exceeded the  
1-54 capacity of the gin's original steam engine, and the latter was thus  
1-55 supplanted in 1925 by a Bessemer Type IV diesel engine with 125  
1-56 horsepower; after that engine failed in 1963, it was replaced by an  
1-57 electric motor, though the diesel engine was repaired and kept as a  
1-58 standby power source; and

1-59 WHEREAS, The Burton Farmers Gin operated from 1914 to 1974,  
1-60 by which time cotton production in the area had almost wholly given  
1-61 way to the raising of livestock; efforts by local citizens to  
1-62 preserve the gin and return it to its 1930s condition began in 1986;  
1-63 as part of the initial phase, the complete gin records, which  
1-64 chronicle cotton production and sales by area farmers as well as the

2-1 history of the physical plant, were indexed and archived; later,  
 2-2 staff from the Smithsonian Institution assisted with the  
 2-3 restoration of the gin's Bessemer engine, the "Lady B," which is  
 2-4 considered to be "the largest operating internal combustion engine  
 2-5 of [its] vintage in the southern United States," and one of the  
 2-6 "few, if [indeed there are] any, engines of this age and horsepower  
 2-7 in operation outside of a museum"; and

2-8 WHEREAS, Today, the Burton Farmers Gin constitutes the main  
 2-9 structure in the nine-acre complex known as the Burton Cotton Gin &  
 2-10 Museum; the gin itself is open for tours year-round and is activated  
 2-11 twice a year, during the Cotton Gin Festival in April and the First  
 2-12 Bale Celebration in October; listed on the National Register of  
 2-13 Historic Places, the Burton Farmers Gin has also been designated a  
 2-14 Texas Historic Landmark by the Texas Historical Commission and a  
 2-15 National Historic Engineering Landmark by the American Society of  
 2-16 Mechanical Engineers; and

2-17 WHEREAS, A key element of the cotton industry, gins were once  
 2-18 a fixture in countless rural Texas communities and a fundamental  
 2-19 part of their local economy; today, the Burton Cotton Gin & Museum  
 2-20 evokes that earlier time and offers a rare window into a critical  
 2-21 technological advance, one that continues to benefit the Lone Star  
 2-22 State; now, therefore, be it

2-23 RESOLVED, That the 81st Legislature of the State of Texas  
 2-24 hereby designate the Burton Cotton Gin & Museum as the official  
 2-25 Cotton Gin Museum of Texas.

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