

By: Kolkhorst

H.R. No. 511

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, On February 19, 2009, proud residents of Austin
2 County are gathering at the State Capitol to celebrate their
3 county's achievements and unique place in the history of the Lone
4 Star State; and

5 WHEREAS, The area that would become Austin County was one of
6 the locations settled by the initial colonists who were brought to
7 Texas by Stephen F. Austin; the first English-language newspaper in
8 Texas, the *Gazette*, was launched in 1829 in the colony's main town,
9 San Felipe de Austin; this settlement played an important part in
10 the Texas Revolution, briefly serving as capital of the provisional
11 government; it became the county seat upon the founding of Austin
12 County in 1837 but was soon supplanted by Bellville; and

13 WHEREAS, Beginning in the 1830s, hundreds of German
14 immigrants settled in the county, and this wave of migration
15 accelerated when well-educated dissidents fled Germany following a
16 failed revolution in 1848; these residents supported the
17 establishment of an opera house in Bellville, a German-language
18 weekly newspaper, and numerous other elements drawn from
19 traditional German culture; the county's sizeable African American
20 community began forming similar institutions during
21 Reconstruction, among them a newspaper and a school for black
22 students; Czech farmers also contributed to the distinctive
23 character of early Austin County, and large numbers of Mexican
24 immigrants began arriving after the First World War; and

1 WHEREAS, Industrial growth brought prominence to the town of
2 Sealy, which became a commercial center in the late 1800s with such
3 manufacturers as the Sealy Mattress Factory and the Engleking
4 Brothers Broom Factory; Sealy is also the hometown of music great
5 Huey Long, a jazz guitarist and original member of the Ink Spots;
6 some of his memorabilia is on display today at the Heritage
7 Park/Santa Fe Park Museum, a fascinating complex that also includes
8 an original settler's prairie home, an antique caboose, and the
9 town's old jail; and

10 WHEREAS, Tourism has joined agribusiness and manufacturing
11 as a key component of the economy; the county's colorful past
12 provides many splendid attractions and visitors to Stephen F.
13 Austin State Park can view the original site of San Felipe de Austin
14 while enjoying hiking, fishing, and other recreational pursuits;
15 moreover, countless travelers come to Austin County in the spring
16 for the scenic vistas of bluebonnets and other wildflowers; and

17 WHEREAS, Austin County maintains its pastoral charm and its
18 many links to Texas heritage even as it prepares for the
19 opportunities of the future, and it is most fitting to take this
20 opportunity to honor it; now, therefore, be it

21 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 81st Texas
22 Legislature hereby recognize February 19, 2009, as Austin County
23 Day and extend to its delegation sincere best wishes for an
24 enjoyable and rewarding visit to the State Capitol.