

By: Lozano

H.R. No. 1326

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Proud residents of Willacy County are gathering at
2 the State Capitol on April 14, 2011, to celebrate Willacy County
3 Day, and this occasion provides a welcome opportunity to recognize
4 the 100th anniversary of the county's founding; and

5 WHEREAS, Located on the Gulf Coast in the Rio Grande Valley,
6 Willacy County was formed in 1911 from parts of Cameron and Hidalgo
7 Counties and also originally included the land that is now Kenedy
8 County; it was named for state legislator John G. Willacy, who
9 introduced the bill that established the county; and

10 WHEREAS, Raymondville, the county seat and largest city, was
11 established by Edward Burleson Raymond in 1904; it is home to the
12 Raymondville Historical Museum and hosts a number of special events
13 throughout the year, including the Willacy County Livestock Show, a
14 Fourth of July celebration, and the Christmas Tree Lighting
15 Ceremony and Christmas Parade; and

16 WHEREAS, Lyford is named for William H. Lyford, an attorney
17 for the Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad, and it rings in the
18 holiday season with the annual Lyford Christmas Parade and
19 Festival; farther east, the close-knit community of Santa Monica
20 celebrates the annual Santa Monica Fest during the fall to benefit
21 Santa Monica Catholic Church; and

22 WHEREAS, A number of other communities are also named for
23 prominent figures in the county's early history; Lasara was platted
24 in 1924 and was named for Laura Harding and Sarah Gill, wives of

1 early settlers William Harding and Lamar Gill, while San Perlita
2 takes its name from Pyrle Johnson, the wife of the town developer;
3 settled before 1906, Sebastian was first known as Stillman but was
4 renamed around 1912 in honor of John Sebastian, vice president of
5 the Rock Island Railroad Company, which helped to develop the area;
6 other notable communities in the county include Los Coyotes,
7 Porfirio, Port Mansfield, and Willamar; and

8 WHEREAS, Young people in the area benefit from the dedicated
9 efforts of the county's school districts, which include the
10 Raymondville Independent School District, with more than 2,200
11 students, the Lyford Consolidated Independent School District,
12 serving over 1,500 students, Lasara ISD, with an enrollment of
13 nearly 400, and San Perlita ISD, with approximately 300 pupils; and

14 WHEREAS, Willacy County residents are employed in a range of
15 private-sector and government jobs, and the county's proximity to
16 Mexico and six international bridges makes transportation and
17 commercial trade central components of the local economy; and

18 WHEREAS, Ecotourism and heritage tourism also generate
19 employment and income; Willacy County's ranchlands and coastal
20 habitats include a wide range of birds, mammals, wild grasses,
21 trees, butterflies, and other species; the county has a
22 well-developed hunting and fishing industry and is a premier
23 destination for those seeking to experience the outdoors; "Wild in
24 Willacy" is an annual event held the last week of October to promote
25 awareness of the area's diverse natural offerings and includes
26 tours of private ranches, lectures on birding, cook-offs, musical
27 entertainment, and more; and

1 WHEREAS, One of the hubs of tourism activity is Port
2 Mansfield, which has unique bird-watching opportunities and is an
3 extremely popular fishing center that hosts a well-known fishing
4 tournament each year; the town's harbor office is run by the Willacy
5 County Navigation District, which also oversees land leases and the
6 county's small-craft airport; and

7 WHEREAS, Willacy County's rich natural environment and its
8 resourceful and productive citizenry make it a great place to live
9 and work, and it is a pleasure to honor this South Texas county as it
10 reflects on a century of growth and progress; now, therefore, be it

11 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 82nd Texas
12 Legislature hereby recognize April 14, 2011, as Willacy County Day
13 at the State Capitol and extend to the visiting delegation sincere
14 best wishes for an enjoyable and rewarding visit to Austin.