

By: Dean

H.C.R. No. 138

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, The 40th annual Great Texas Balloon Race is taking
2 place in Longview from July 28-30, 2017, and this milestone year
3 provides a fitting opportunity to reflect on the event's rich
4 history; and

5 WHEREAS, This renowned balloon race had its start in 1978,
6 when Dr. Bill Bussey, a hot air balloon pilot who held more than a
7 dozen world records, agreed to use his balloon to promote the grand
8 opening of the Longview Mall; in return, the mall's managers
9 supported him in establishing a race, and the following year, 20
10 balloons were launched from the mall parking lot; and

11 WHEREAS, More local businesses soon joined in the effort to
12 make the affair a success, and in 1981, Dr. Bussey and his fellow
13 pilots originated the popular "balloon glow," an evening attraction
14 featuring tethered balloons lit from within, creating the effect of
15 giant lanterns flickering in the night; this popular tradition has
16 since been repeated yearly and replicated at balloon events all
17 over the world; and

18 WHEREAS, Today, the Great Texas Balloon Race is based at the
19 East Texas Regional Airport, with pilots competing for the Texas
20 State Championship title and, this year, for the Southwest Regional
21 Championship title; from 2012 to 2015, the event was also the host
22 site for the Balloon Federation of America National Championship
23 contest; one of the most highly anticipated races of the weekend is
24 the Controlled Navigational Trajectory Event, now known as the

1 Fly-in, or the ring toss, where balloonists try to steer their
2 balloon toward a 12-inch ring atop a 20-foot pole; over its 40-year
3 history, the race has awarded more than \$1.5 million in prize money
4 to competing pilots; and

5 WHEREAS, Every summer, Longview and the surrounding
6 communities welcome the best hot air balloon pilots from across the
7 nation and around the world, as well as tens of thousands of
8 spectators, and in 2013, the 83rd Texas Legislature declared Gregg
9 County the Balloon Race Capital of Texas; and

10 WHEREAS, For 40 years, this spectacular competition has
11 brought great pride to the Gregg County community while thrilling
12 residents and visitors alike with the unforgettable sight of vivid,
13 colorful balloons soaring against the East Texas sky; now,
14 therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, That the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas
16 hereby commemorate the 40th annual Great Texas Balloon Race and
17 extend to all those associated with the competition sincere best
18 wishes for a meaningful and memorable event; and, be it further

19 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
20 prepared for the Great Texas Balloon Race as an expression of high
21 regard by the Texas House of Representatives and Senate.