

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 316

WHEREAS, Citizens of Presidio County are visiting Austin on March 1, 2017, in celebration of Presidio County Day at the State Capitol; and

WHEREAS, An area steeped in history and possessed of a frontier mystique, Presidio County lies in the Trans-Pecos region of Southwest Texas and is bordered by the Rio Grande and Mexico; its desert terrain varies from rolling plains to canyons and volcanic cliffs and rises to some of the state's tallest mountain ranges, as well as to its highest waterfall, Capote Falls, with a drop of 175 feet; and

WHEREAS, Diverse populations of Paleo-Indians once roamed Presidio County, and Jumanos, Apaches, and Comanches were present in the area when Spanish missions arrived in the 1680s; the outskirts of present-day Presidio, where corn farmers of the Cochise culture settled around 1500 B.C., is believed to contain the oldest continuously cultivated farmland in Texas, and in the 19th century, a settlement was founded on Cibolo Creek by José Ygnacio Ronquillo, who was issued a constitutional land grant in 1832; and

WHEREAS, Presidio County was established from parts of the Bexar Land District on January 3, 1850, and organized a quarter-century later; initially the largest county in the United States at 12,000 square miles, it eventually relinquished land and today holds the claim of fourth-largest county in the state at nearly 3,860 square miles; its original county seat was Fort Davis, which became part of Jeff Davis County, and the Presidio County government relocated to Marfa two years after the town's founding in 1883; and

WHEREAS, From the 1880s to the 1940s, silver mining was a leading industry in Presidio County after a silver deposit was found in the Chinati Mountains by local rancher and trader John W. Spencer; his discovery led to the opening of Presidio Mine, which would produce more than 32.6 million ounces of silver over the course of its existence; and

WHEREAS, Today, the local economy is based primarily on agriculture; in the southern portion of the county, the loamy soil provides fertile ground for growing tomatoes, melons, onions, grain, and cotton, while ranchers have traditionally raised sheep and cattle, including the famed Highland Hereford, wherever there is adequate pastureland; although no permanent streams exist in the county, the completion of Elephant Butte Dam across the Rio Grande in 1910 created a reliable supply of irrigation water, greatly increasing farming production; and

WHEREAS, Presidio, with a population of nearly 4,500, is the county's largest town and home to the Fort Leaton historic site, a public museum containing ruins, exhibits, and nature trails; the county seat of Marfa has some 2,000 people and boasts

S.R. No. 316

historical attractions, as well as an active local arts scene that includes the world-renowned Chinati Foundation; the town has become a popular tourist draw for its vintage charm and art and for the mysterious Marfa Lights, an atmospheric phenomenon first observed in the night sky in 1883; and

WHEREAS, With its friendly people, majestic scenery, and sundry intangible qualities, Presidio County is truly a treasure of the Lone Star State, and it is indeed a pleasure to celebrate the heritage and contributions of this storied region; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 85th Legislature, hereby recognize Presidio County Day at the State Capitol and extend to the visiting delegation sincere best wishes for a meaningful and memorable visit to Austin.

Rodríguez

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on March 1, 2017.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate