

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 571

WHEREAS, The Senate of the State of Texas is pleased to recognize District 21 of the Texas Department of Transportation, also known as the Pharr District, as the agency celebrates a century since its earliest incarnation in 1917 as the Texas Highway Department and was tasked with the building and maintenance of our state's roadways; and

WHEREAS, The first construction project under the supervision of the Texas Highway Department was a 20-mile section of untreated flexible base 16 feet wide between Falfurrias and Encino; work began in October of 1918 and was completed in June of 1920; the corridor that was built is in the same location as present day U.S. Route 281; and

WHEREAS, District 21 of the Texas Department of Transportation was organized on April 1, 1932, and encompassed the 10 southernmost counties of the state; District 21 began operations under the supervision of district engineer J. W. Puckett; the first headquarters office for the district was located in an upstairs bank building on South Cage and Caffery in Pharr; and

WHEREAS, The earliest major challenge for the new district occurred in September and October of 1932, when the Rio Grande flooded twice, sending large amounts of water through the floodway system for the first time; all county roads crossing the floodway were blocked for several days, closing as the flood moved downstream and opening as the flow subsided; levees were built at low overflow areas to lead surplus water from the east and northeast to a junction south of and between McAllen and Pharr; the United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission took over the responsibilities of the floodway system in the early 1930s; and

WHEREAS, The principal objective of District 21 was to plan and construct an adequate public road network system to serve area residents; the first designation in Hidalgo County following the organization of District 21 was an extension of S.H. 66 from Pharr to the International Bridge in Hidalgo; Texas Highway Department operations stopped at the river levee on the approach to the bridge; and

WHEREAS, Today the Texas Department of Transportation District 21 serves Brooks, Cameron, Willacy, Hidalgo, Starr, Jim Hogg, Zapata, and Kenedy Counties and is under the direction of Toribio Garza, District Engineer; Hector Gonzalez, Deputy District Engineer; Jesus Leal, Director of Traffic Operations; Homer Bazan, Director of Transportation Planning and Development; and Rex Costley, Director of Maintenance; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 85th Legislature, hereby commend the Texas Department of Transportation District 21 for its continued service to the

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people of South Texas and congratulate the agency on its centennial celebration; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared for the Texas Department of Transportation Pharr District as an expression of esteem from the Texas Senate.

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President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on April 4, 2017.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate