88R11028 BK-D

By:  Leo-Wilson H.C.R. No. 42

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, For over half a century, Winnie has been known far and wide as the host of the Texas Rice Festival, a celebration of the local rice harvest and the integral role that the rice industry has played in the area's history, development, and culture; and

WHEREAS, First cultivated locally around 1900, rice has long been essential to the regional economy; the Texas Rice Festival originated in 1968 as a special event held by St. Louis Catholic Church of Winnie to commemorate the conclusion of the growing season; its popularity stirred further interest among area farmers, and they banded together to establish the Texas Rice Festival and obtain a charter for the celebration in October 1969; Winnie was selected to be the host town before the inaugural Rice Festival was held on October 3, 1970, and the event has continued to be organized each year around the first weekend of October; and

WHEREAS, Five years after the first Rice Festival took place, the board of directors recognized the need for more space to accommodate the growth of the event, and the decision was made to relocate it from downtown Winnie to Winnie-Stowell Park on LeBlanc Road; initially a one-day affair, it has since expanded to multiple days of activities, including parades, musical performances, car and livestock shows, photography and art exhibits, and a barbecue cook-off; the festival also features a slate of pageants, where youth of all ages compete for such titles as Senior Queen, Miss LaPetite, and Little Rice King; moreover, awards are presented to honor the Farmer of the Year and other deserving members of the community; and

WHEREAS, The enduring popularity of the Texas Rice Festival is a testament to the pride that local residents take in the rich agricultural heritage of the Winnie area, and the town's connection to the festival and to the tasty and versatile grain that inspired it is indeed deserving of special recognition; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the 88th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby designate Winnie as the official Rice Capital of Texas; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That, in accordance with the provisions of Section 391.003(e), Government Code, this designation remain in effect until the 10th anniversary of the date this resolution is finally passed by the legislature.