

By: Representatives Shepherd, Barker

HOUSE RESOLUTION

TO COMMEMORATE THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
DISCOVERY OF OIL IN SOUTH ARKANSAS.

Subtitle

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ANNIVERSARY OF THE DISCOVERY OF OIL IN
SOUTH ARKANSAS.

WHEREAS, according to Tom Dillard in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette and the El Dorado Insider, Mr. Samuel T. Busey, a physician-turned-geologist who claimed descent from frontiersman Daniel Boone, began drilling near El Dorado, Arkansas, in November 1920 after he cobbled together enough investors to attempt to find oil; and

WHEREAS, close to noon on Monday, January 10, 1921, at two thousand two hundred thirty-three feet (2,233'), bailing operations began to clear Mr. Busey's well, and by 4:30 p.m. that day, a rumble from deep within the well could be heard, with onlookers later describing the eruption of the well to a reporter who wrote of oil pouring out of the well and rising above the derrick like "a black mushroom cloud"; and

WHEREAS, within hours of that strike, El Dorado was on its way to boomtown status with oil scouts and new arrivals, eventually transforming from a town of about four thousand (4,000) to a boomtown of fifteen thousand (15,000); and

WHEREAS, El Dorado was wholly unprepared for the sudden arrival of more



than ten thousand (10,000) people; the town's hotels began filling so quickly that even lobby chairs and cots were rented to new arrivals; residents rented spare bedrooms and even porches, and barbers rented their chairs; and tiny businesses from restaurants to hardware stores to photography studios flourished; and

WHEREAS, the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce opened an office in El Dorado; more people continued to stream into town; and within only six (6) months of Mr. Busey's strike, more than two hundred (200) wells were producing in Union County and more were being drilled; and

WHEREAS, the oil business had its challenges in South Arkansas but settled in, and an infrastructure was put into place to support it, with oil transported by rail and eventually creation of pipelines and storage tanks to allow a more orderly transfer of the product; and

WHEREAS, in 1925, seventy-seven million (77,000,000) barrels of oil were produced, equating to approximately four billion six hundred million dollars (\$4,600,000,000) today; and

WHEREAS, many who came to Union County seeking fortune were disappointed, but a few succeeded, including Mr. Thomas Harry Barton, who built a business marketing the natural gas that had previously been viewed as a useless byproduct and later became president of Lion Oil Company, growing it into one (1) of the largest oil companies in the South; and

WHEREAS, another man who succeeded was Mr. Charles H. Murphy Sr., a businessman who got his start in the banking and mercantile business but shifted to oil and built Murphy Oil Company into a company engaged in crude oil and natural gas production in the United States and in worldwide oil and gas exploration,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

THAT the House of Representatives recognize the significance of the oil boom in South Arkansas and commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the discovery of oil in South Arkansas.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT upon adoption of this resolution, an appropriate copy shall be provided to the El Dorado Chamber of Commerce by the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives.