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HOUSE MEMORIAL 53

56TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2024

INTRODUCED BY

Harlan Vincent

A MEMORIAL

DECLARING FEBRUARY 7, 2024 "LINCOLN COUNTY DAY" IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WHEREAS, Hollywood has made millions of dollars based on films set in the beauty, adventure and drama of the historical American west; and

WHEREAS, the actual history of Lincoln county, New Mexico, rivals and outshines the best script Hollywood has ever produced; and

WHEREAS, being central to the original territory occupied by the Mescalero bands of the Apache people and representing the western edge of the Comanche territory, the mountains and canyons of Lincoln county stood witness as Apaches and Comanches and succeeding waves of Spanish, Mexican and Anglo-American settlers competed, often violently, for land and .228151.1

water; and

WHEREAS, the post-Civil-War era saw a boom in the western cattle industry, and by the mid-1870s, two rival "rings" had formed to compete for land, water and power within Lincoln county; and

WHEREAS, on February 18, 1878, the murder of one ringleader, John Tunstall, by a posse deputized by Sheriff William Brady, and the subsequent revenge killing of Sheriff Brady on April 1, 1878, began the infamous Lincoln County War; and

WHEREAS, the Lincoln County War was conducted by men with colorful names, such as "Buckshot" Roberts, "Dash" Wait, "Big Jim" French and Billy "the Kid", and by groups known as the "Seven Rivers Warriors", the "Jesse Evans Gang" and the "Regulators"; and

WHEREAS, many of the individuals in the Lincoln County War were known alternatively to have worn a sheriff's badge or to have been cattle rustlers and murderers at various points in their careers; and

WHEREAS, during the Capitan Gap fire in the spring of 1950, a bear cub was rescued by firefighters and became known as "Smokey Bear", Lincoln county's most famous native son; and

WHEREAS, Smokey Bear became a national symbol for forest fire prevention and the subject of the popular song "Smokey the Bear"; and

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WHEREAS, Smokey Bear lived at the national zoo in Washington, D.C., for twenty-six years, was visited by thousands of schoolchildren and received so much fan mail that the United States postal service gave Smokey his own zip code, and he is now buried at Smokey Bear historical park in Capitan, New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, Lincoln county offers numerous opportunities for hiking, backpacking and skiing within dramatic mountain landscapes typified by Capitan peak and Sierra Blanca mountain; and

WHEREAS, Ruidoso Downs in Lincoln county offers both thoroughbred and quarter horse racing, including the all American futurity, the richest race in American quarter horse racing;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that Lincoln county be recognized as having one of the most colorful and intriguing histories in America, epitomizing the legend of the "Wild West" and being a beautiful and exciting place to live and visit; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that February 7, 2024 be declared "Lincoln County Day" in the house of representatives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be transmitted to the Lincoln county board of county commissioners.