

SUBJECT: Creating the Spindletop Centennial Celebration Commission

COMMITTEE: State Affairs — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 11 ayes — Wolens, S. Turner, Alvarado, Brimer, Carter, Counts, Danburg, Hilbert, Hunter, Longoria, Stiles

0 nays

4 absent — Craddick, D. Jones, McCall, Ramsay

WITNESSES: For — Ryan Smith, Texas Energy Museum

Against — None

BACKGROUND : The Spindletop oil field was discovered near Beaumont on January 10, 1901. By 1902, Spindletop was producing 18 million barrels of crude oil — 20 percent of the entire U.S. combined production. Spindletop moved the focus of the oil industry from Pennsylvania to Texas. By 1928, Texas was producing more petroleum than any other state.

DIGEST: CSHB 1428 would establish a 20-member agency to coordinate state and local activities relating to the centennial celebration of the discovery of the Spindletop oil field. The commission could encourage individuals, businesses, local governments and private organizations to organize appropriate activities relating to the celebration, publicize the event, and accept grants, gifts or donations. The commission would be abolished March 31, 2002.

The committee would be composed of 13 public members appointed by the governor and seven ex-officio members, each a voting member.

The public members would include two representatives each from Lamar University, Texas A&M University, and the Texas Energy Museum; five residents of Jefferson County; and three residents of Texas. Ex-officio members would include two representatives appointed by the speaker, two senators appointed by the lieutenant governor, and the executive directors of

the Railroad Commission, the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, and the Texas Historical Commission.

One member of the commission would be elected as presiding officer and would call regularly scheduled meetings at the Texas Energy Museum in Beaumont. Special meetings could be held elsewhere in the state.

Public members of the commission would serve two-year terms expiring February 1 of odd-numbered years. Terms of the first public members would expire February 1, 1999. Public members could be re-appointed. Ex-officio members could designate a representative to serve in their place; they could not serve on the commission if they no longer held the position that qualified them for service on the commission.

Public members would not be entitled to compensation but could be reimbursed for travel expenses, as provided in the General Appropriations Act. Compensation or travel reimbursement for ex-officio members would be decided by the laws governing them as state officials, and payments would be made to them from the their employing entity.

Between December 31, 2001, and March 21, 2002, the commission would have to determine that its work was finished and its financial obligations satisfied and file a verified report with the Secretary of State showing the commission's total contributions, expenditures, and remaining nonappropriated funds. Unexpended unappropriated funds would be deposited in the state treasury in general revenue.

CSHB 1428 would take immediate effect if finally approved by a two-thirds record vote of the membership in each house.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

The discovery of the Spindletop oil field in 1901 had a profound effect on the economic, social and political history of the state. The history of 20th century Texas is inextricably linked with the history of oil, and Spindletop transformed the oil industry not only in the state but also in the entire nation. The 100-year anniversary of its historic discovery deserves to be celebrated by all Texans. CSHB 1428 would ensure that the festivities were well coordinated and publicized by setting up the Spindletop Centennial Celebration Commission. Fund raising, publicity and planning would be

better managed by a single state commission to oversee all aspects of the celebration rather than on a piecemeal basis by various groups across the state. In the past, similar commissions have successfully coordinated other historical commemorations, such as the centennial and sesquicentennial celebrations.

A statewide celebration of Spindletop would generate additional tourism in the state and foster increased cultural and historical tourism — one of the fastest growing branches of the Texas tourist industry. Texas teachers could also use the celebrations as an opportunity to introduce a new generation of Texans to the state's rich history, and the importance oil has played in the making of modern Texas.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

No apparent opposition.

NOTES:

The committee substitute changed the deadline for abolishing the commission from March 31, 2001, to March 31, 2002, added a provision specifying that reimbursement for travel expenses and compensation for ex-officio members would be governed by the laws that apply to them as state officials, and specified that the terms of public members would expire February 1, 1999.