

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.C.R. 11
By: Blanco
Administration
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Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The picturesque and historic community of Fort Davis deserves special recognition as the town with the highest elevation in the Lone Star State, 5,050 feet above sea level.

Completely surrounded by the Chihuahuan Desert, Fort Davis is situated among the Davis Mountains in what geographers call a "sky island," a self-contained mountainous region with a cooler and wetter climate than the hot, arid region all around it. This impressive geological formation is the result of volcanic activity 35 million years ago, and the area's forested ecology is inhabited by flora and fauna that couldn't survive in the desert below. For centuries, Native American groups, including the Mescalero Apache, used this elevated, temperate region as a refuge from the harsh conditions of the desert.

Fort Davis takes its name from the United States Army post that was established in 1854, a location now preserved as the Fort Davis National Historic Site. Brevet General Persifor F. Smith, commander of the Department of Texas, personally selected the site in part because the high elevation helped guarantee its "pure water and salubrious climate." Thanks to its unusual geography, the area was also blessed with ample timber, game, and forage for livestock, which benefited the soldiers of the fort, as well as the ranchers and other settlers who followed. Through the decades, the town has been popular with visitors who enjoy its cool nights during the blistering heat of a Texas summer, a tradition that began in the years before air conditioning and continues to the present.

In addition to the restored fort, the area's attractions include the scenic beauty of Davis Mountains State Park and its majestic Indian Lodge hotel as well as the magnificent ponderosa pines of the Davis Mountains Preserve. Motorists enjoy driving the Davis Mountains Scenic Loop, which is the highest section of the Texas highway system, reaching an altitude of 6,700 feet. Star-filled nights are another boon of the town's elevation, and they are best experienced at the Star Parties hosted by the nearby McDonald Observatory.

Uniquely situated amid rugged mountains and below the spectacular West Texas sky, Fort Davis is beloved by residents and visitors alike, and it has earned a well-deserved reputation as one of the Lone Star State's "top" destinations.

RESOLVED

That the 87th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby designate Fort Davis as the official Highest Town in Texas.

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.