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SENATE MEMORIAL 41

52ND LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2015

INTRODUCED BY

William F. Burt

A MEMORIAL

DECLARING FEBRUARY 4, 2015 "LINCOLN COUNTY DAY" AT THE SENATE.

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 water; and

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

5 WHEREAS, on February 18, 1878, the murder of one
6 ringleader, John Tunstall, by a posse deputized by Sheriff
7 William Brady and the subsequent revenge killing of Sheriff
8 Brady on April 1, 1878 began the infamous Lincoln county war;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, the Lincoln county war was conducted by men with
11 colorful names, such as "Buckshot" Anderson, "Dash" Wait, "Big
12 Jim" French and Billy "the Kid", and by groups known as the
13 "Seven Rivers Boys", the "Jesse Evans Gang" and the
14 "Regulators"; and

15 WHEREAS, many of the individuals in the Lincoln county war
16 were known alternatively to have worn a sheriff's badge or to
17 have been cattle rustlers and murderers at various points in
18 their careers; and

19 WHEREAS, during the Capitan Gap fire in the spring of
20 1950, a bear cub was rescued by firefighters and became known
21 as "Smokey Bear", Lincoln county's most famous native son; and

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

25 WHEREAS, Smokey Bear lived at the national zoo in

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

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

10 WHEREAS, Ruidoso Downs within Lincoln county offers both
11 thoroughbred and quarter horse racing, including the all-
12 American futurity, the richest race in American quarter horse
13 racing;

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

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that February 4, 2015 be declared
20 "Lincoln County Day" in the senate; and

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