

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 136

By Hackworth

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate the citizens of Oak Ridge upon the celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of “Operation Open Sesame.”

WHEREAS, this General Assembly takes great pleasure in paying tribute to those estimable cities that are celebrating milestones in their history; and

WHEREAS, one such notable city is Oak Ridge, the citizens of which will be celebrating the opening of the city’s gates to the public by observing the sixtieth anniversary of “Operation Open Sesame”; and

WHEREAS, framed by the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, Oak Ridge was built under a cloak of tremendous secrecy during World War II; in an effort to bring an end to the war, three cities, Los Alamos, New Mexico, Hanford, Washington, and Oak Ridge, Tennessee, were chosen to be part of the top-secret “Manhattan Project,” which would produce the world’s first atomic weapons; and

WHEREAS, the United States Army Corps of Engineers bought 59,000 acres of rural Tennessee farm land in 1942; the city of Oak Ridge, originally known as Clinton Engineering Works, and three manufacturing plants of unprecedented scope were constructed to develop a technology that ended the war; and

WHEREAS, the land on which the city and plants were built met military requirements for isolation, electric power from the Tennessee Valley Authority’s Norris Dam, water, labor, and accessibility to nearby highways and railroads; and

WHEREAS, shrouded under a veil of secrecy, the city of Oak Ridge and the work the residents undertook were some of the most important and closely kept secrets of the United States government during World War II; all roads leading into the Secret City, as it became

known, were protected by gates guarded by armed military personnel, and any persons having business within the city needed top security clearance to pass through the gates; and

WHEREAS, after World War II ended, the “Manhattan Project” was placed under the direction of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC); the AEC decided to open the gates of the Secret City to the public on March 19, 1949, the same year Oak Ridge was officially recognized on state and national maps; and

WHEREAS, the upcoming sixtieth anniversary of “Operation Open Sesame” will commemorate this area’s rich history with fun for all ages, including a re-enactment of the symbolic ribbon cutting ceremony of the opening of Elza Gate, a flag ceremony by local Girl Scouts in period uniforms at the American Museum of Science and Energy, and a souvenir documentary based on the history of the Secret City from 1942-1949; and

WHEREAS, this legislative body wishes to grasp this golden opportunity to honor and commend the past and present citizens of the great city of Oak Ridge; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we recognize and honor the citizens of Oak Ridge, congratulate them upon the celebration of the city’s observance of the sixtieth anniversary of “Operation Open Sesame,” and wish them every success in all future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.