

1 State of Arkansas  
2 93rd General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2021

HR 1015

4  
5 By: Representatives Shepherd, Barker

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7 **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

8 TO COMMEMORATE THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
9 DISCOVERY OF OIL IN SOUTH ARKANSAS.

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12 **Subtitle**

13 TO COMMEMORATE THE ONE HUNDREDTH  
14 ANNIVERSARY OF THE DISCOVERY OF OIL IN  
15 SOUTH ARKANSAS.

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17  
18 WHEREAS, according to Tom Dillard in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette and  
19 the El Dorado Insider, Mr. Samuel T. Busey, a physician-turned-geologist who  
20 claimed descent from frontiersman Daniel Boone, began drilling near El  
21 Dorado, Arkansas, in November 1920 after he cobbled together enough investors  
22 to attempt to find oil; and

23  
24 WHEREAS, close to noon on Monday, January 10, 1921, at two thousand two  
25 hundred thirty-three feet (2,233'), bailing operations began to clear Mr.  
26 Busey's well, and by 4:30 p.m. that day, a rumble from deep within the well  
27 could be heard, with onlookers later describing the eruption of the well to a  
28 reporter who wrote of oil pouring out of the well and rising above the  
29 derrick like "a black mushroom cloud"; and

30  
31 WHEREAS, within hours of that strike, El Dorado was on its way to  
32 boomtown status with oil scouts and new arrivals, eventually transforming  
33 from a town of about four thousand (4,000) to a boomtown of fifteen thousand  
34 (15,000); and

35  
36 WHEREAS, El Dorado was wholly unprepared for the sudden arrival of more



1 than ten thousand (10,000) people; the town's hotels began filling so quickly  
2 that even lobby chairs and cots were rented to new arrivals; residents rented  
3 spare bedrooms and even porches, and barbers rented their chairs; and tiny  
4 businesses from restaurants to hardware stores to photography studios  
5 flourished; and

6  
7 WHEREAS, the Little Rock Chamber of Commerce opened an office in El  
8 Dorado; more people continued to stream into town; and within only six (6)  
9 months of Mr. Busey's strike, more than two hundred (200) wells were  
10 producing in Union County and more were being drilled; and

11  
12 WHEREAS, the oil business had its challenges in South Arkansas but  
13 settled in, and an infrastructure was put into place to support it, with oil  
14 transported by rail and eventually creation of pipelines and storage tanks to  
15 allow a more orderly transfer of the product; and

16  
17 WHEREAS, in 1925, seventy-seven million (77,000,000) barrels of oil  
18 were produced, equating to approximately four billion six hundred million  
19 dollars (\$4,600,000,000) today; and

20  
21 WHEREAS, many who came to Union County seeking fortune were  
22 disappointed, but a few succeeded, including Mr. Thomas Harry Barton, who  
23 built a business marketing the natural gas that had previously been viewed as  
24 a useless byproduct and later became president of Lion Oil Company, growing  
25 it into one (1) of the largest oil companies in the South; and

26  
27 WHEREAS, another man who succeeded was Mr. Charles H. Murphy Sr., a  
28 businessman who got his start in the banking and mercantile business but  
29 shifted to oil and built Murphy Oil Company into a company engaged in crude  
30 oil and natural gas production in the United States and in worldwide oil and  
31 gas exploration,

32  
33 NOW THEREFORE,

34 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-THIRD GENERAL  
35 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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1            THAT the House of Representatives recognize the significance of the oil  
2 boom in South Arkansas and commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the  
3 discovery of oil in South Arkansas.

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5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT upon adoption of this resolution, an appropriate  
6 copy shall be provided to the El Dorado Chamber of Commerce by the Chief  
7 Clerk of the House of Representatives.

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