

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 683  
By Beavers

A RESOLUTION to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the DeKalb County Fair.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it fitting to pay tribute to those events that provide education and entertainment to the citizens of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, notable as one of the longest running county fairs in the American South, the DeKalb County Fair is one such praiseworthy event; and

WHEREAS, the DeKalb County Fair, an ongoing and ever-evolving tribute to Southern agrarian heritage and its descendant culture of our present-day agricultural community, will celebrate its 150th anniversary in July of 2006; and

WHEREAS, chartered through the good offices of the State Legislature in 1856, the first DeKalb County Fair was to be held on the weekend of October 5-7, 1855, but a snowfall caused the Fair to be postponed until the following Monday; and

WHEREAS, that first snowfall in 1856 was the first of a multitude of events that created problems for the Fair. In 1863, Federal troops camped on the fairgrounds and destroyed rail pens by fire when they left, and in 1903, high waters washed thousands of sheaves of wheat down Hickman Creek, which runs along the grounds; a night fire on June 14, 1914, destroyed the Grandstand, and in 1923, the largest building standing on a county fairground, the Women's Building, was demolished by a storm and had to be rebuilt for the Fair's opening; and

WHEREAS, on June 24, 1928, a tornado destroyed the cattle barn and heavily damaged the Women's Building, 37 stables, the Grandstand, fences, and the bridge; the owners rebuilt for the second time, only to have the free act platform, the ladies' restroom, fences, and 24 stables washed away by flood waters in 1929; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1960s, a fire caused heavy structural damage to the stables on the first level of the Women's Building, and tornado-like winds and rain inflicted heavy damage

to the Grandstand and other buildings in 1974; in 1979, wind and rain once again tore through the grounds, demolishing the Women's Building and damaging other structures; and

WHEREAS, despite all the trials and tribulations, the DeKalb County Fair has continued to provide a place for local farms to show crops and livestock, and for women, children, and young people to exhibit their laudable talents with animals, food, crafts, and beauty; and

WHEREAS, in 1994, the DeKalb County Fair was purchased by the city of Alexandria; a countywide board operates the Fair, which is completely run by volunteers, and benefits greatly from their astute direction; and

WHEREAS, despite the many changes it has undergone during the course of 150 years, the leadership of the DeKalb County Fair remains committed to keeping ownership of the Fair vested with the citizens of DeKalb County; and

WHEREAS, only through the diligent work and dedication of the staff members and volunteers and the support of the DeKalb County Executive and Board of Commissioners, businesses, civic groups, and organizations throughout the county could the DeKalb County Fair have reached its present level of success; and

WHEREAS, any profit derived from the Fair goes back into the Fair, and is used for the improvement of the grounds and facilities; and

WHEREAS, the DeKalb County Fair boasts several important "firsts" in Fair history, including, in 1908, being the first county fair in Tennessee, and some say in the entire South, to hold a night fair, as until that time all fairs were enjoyed during daylight hours only; electricity to light the night and the admission to pay for it were introduced at the DeKalb County Fair; and

WHEREAS, since its inception in 1856, the DeKalb County Fair has made many changes in order to adapt to its ever changing community, as revisions have been constantly made to include technology and ideas that have improved the quality of life in the county; and

WHEREAS, committed to growth and improvement in 2006, those who have contributed to the astounding success of the DeKalb County Fair in the past have once again worked resolutely as a team this year to accomplish the organization's goal of producing an exceptionally enjoyable experience focused on the county's agricultural heritage and modern agricultural economy; and

WHEREAS, this Body wishes to acknowledge and applaud the 150th celebration of agriculture and home economics that is the DeKalb County Fair; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor and commend the DeKalb County Fair Association officers and board members, staff, volunteers, and attendees as they revel in the excitement and spectacle of the 150th Annual DeKalb County Fair, one of the longest running county fairs in the American South, and extend to them our best wishes for much continued success during the next one hundred fifty years.

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