

ENROLLED SENATE
RESOLUTION NO. 21 By: Laughlin

A Resolution commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Woodward, Oklahoma, tornado; declaring a day of reflection; and directing distribution.

WHEREAS, April 9, 1947, did not seem to be a remarkable day in Woodward, Oklahoma. However, an enormous mass of cold, dry air, probably from Siberia, rushed toward the west coast of the United States. This particular version of the Siberian Express entered California causing 30 mile per hour winds in some southern California towns. Thunderstorms arose in southern Utah. The storm continued its march east; and

WHEREAS, waiting for the Siberian Express, which was led by a low pressure system covering an area larger than the state of Arizona, was a body of warm, moist air from the Gulf of Mexico. The two would meet in the panhandle area of Texas and Oklahoma; and

WHEREAS, as the two masses of contrasting air, one cold and dry, the other warm and wet, rushed toward each other, towers of clouds were formed. At the top were ice crystals. Lightning and thunder were in evidence throughout and rain began to fall in torrents. The storm was ten miles wide and traveled 40 miles per hour. Then the funnels appeared. There were five or six funnels with winds up to 200 miles per hour; and

WHEREAS, the tornado swept through 200 miles of Texas, through Oklahoma and into Kansas. The towns of Glazier, Higgins, Coburn and White Deer in Texas, were struck as were Woodward and Gage in Oklahoma. Glazier was leveled and never rebuilt. The twister hit Woodward at about 9 p.m. Some 36 blocks of buildings, approximately one-third of the town, were damaged or destroyed including the courthouse, hospital and school. It was the deadliest tornado in Oklahoma history, killing 116 people. Over 1,000 people were injured. Electric power went out. Fire broke out after the tornado, but was quenched by heavy rains; and

WHEREAS, Richard Bedard has authored a book, "In the Shadow of the Tornado" that recounts the history of the Woodward tornado. The book is a history of the event that reaches the fifty-year milestone on April 9, 1997.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE 1ST SESSION OF THE 46TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE:

THAT the Oklahoma State Senate commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of the Woodward, Oklahoma, tornado.

THAT the Oklahoma State Senate declares April 9, 1997, as a day of reflection.

THAT a copy of this resolution be distributed to George Goetzinger, Mayor of Woodward; Richard Bedard, author of "In the Shadow of the Tornado"; Louise James, Curator, Plains Indians and Pioneers Museum; and Kay Bell, Head Librarian, Woodward Public Library.

Adopted by the Senate the 9th day of April, 1997.

President of the Senate