ENROLLED SENATE
RESOLUTION NO. 50 By: Gustafson

A Resolution encouraging the educational endeavors of Fort Reno; directing the Department of Transportation to erect informational highway signs for the historic Fort Reno Visitor Center; and directing distribution.

WHEREAS, Fort Reno was declared a military reservation in 1875. The principal occupation of the troops at Fort Reno was the protection of the Cheyenne Indians and the Darlington Indian Agency, and overseeing the Run of '89, keeping the Sooners out of Oklahoma Territory; and

WHEREAS, Fort Reno was abandoned as a military post on February 24, 1908. Three months later the federal government established the nearly 10,000 acres as a remount depot to purchase and train horses and mules for use by cavalry and artillery units; and

WHEREAS, Fort Reno continued to supply pack animals for use in the mountains of Italy and the jungles of Southeast Asia during World War II as well as serving as a home for German prisoners of war; and

WHEREAS, the cemetery at Fort Reno contains not only the historic original inhabitants, including several famous Indian scouts and the families of some of the original soldiers, but also a special section reserved for those Italian and German Prisoners of War who died while interred at Fort Reno during World War II. It is not unusual for foreign visitors to seek out the cemetery, looking for the grave of a family member, neighbor or friend; and

WHEREAS, Fort Reno was turned over to the United States Department of Agriculture in July 1948. Today its mission is to enhance the conversion of forage into lean red meat and fiber by increasing the quantity and quality of forage produced and the efficiency with which animals convert forage to a usable product; and

WHEREAS, Fort Reno becomes a temple of remembrance as historical reenactors present "Tombstone Tales", based on the lives and legends of those buried in the cemetery. The famous and the virtually unknown have stories of their lives and deaths told to enchanted audiences; and

WHEREAS, each year historic Fort Reno acts as host to thousands of tourists and visitors from throughout the state, nation and world. Fort Reno becomes the center of the frontier west as historical reenactors from around the country gather to relive Indian Territory in the eighteen hundreds. Groups representing cavalry units, native American Indians, homesteaders, Boomers and Sooners meet to celebrate Oklahoma's Western heritage; and

WHEREAS, the Fort Reno Visitor Center is a joint private-public activity with support coming from the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department, the Agricultural Research Station and the El Reno Chamber of Commerce.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE 2ND SESSION OF THE 46TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE:

THAT the Oklahoma State Senate encourages the preservation and the educational endeavors of historic Fort Reno.

THAT the Oklahoma State Senate directs the Department of Transportation to erect informational highway signs as requested by the Fort Reno Visitor Center.

THAT a copy of this resolution be distributed to the Department of Transportation, the Fort Reno Visitor Center, the Oklahoma Historical Society, the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department and the El Reno Chamber of Commerce.