

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 2

BY STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1  
2 STATING LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND COMMEMORATING THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTIETH  
3 ANNIVERSARY OF THE BUILDING OF THE EAGLE ROCK BRIDGE, THE FIRST BRIDGE  
4 EVER TO CROSS THE SNAKE RIVER, WHICH BEGAN THE FOUNDING OF A SETTLEMENT  
5 WHICH WOULD BECOME THE CITY OF IDAHO FALLS.

6 Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Idaho:

7 WHEREAS, in 1865 Matt Taylor, a Montana Trail freighter, built a toll  
8 bridge across a narrow black basaltic gorge of the Snake River that succeeded  
9 a ferry seven miles upstream by a few years; and

10 WHEREAS, Taylor's bridge served the new tide of westward migration  
11 and travel in the region for settlers moving north and west and for miners,  
12 freighters and others seeking riches in the gold fields of Idaho and Montana,  
13 especially the boom towns of Bannack and Virginia City in western Montana;  
14 and

15 WHEREAS, mail service postmarks indicate by 1866 the emerging town had  
16 become known as Eagle Rock, which was derived from an isolated basalt island  
17 in the Snake River, seven miles upstream in the Snake River that was the nest-  
18 ing site for eagles; and

19 WHEREAS, previous to Taylor's bridge, in 1864, Harry Ricketts built and  
20 operated a ferry at this location and so this area of crossing at the Snake  
21 River was already known as Eagle Rock to those who did business or traveled  
22 on the Montana Trail. A private bank (the fourth in Idaho), a small hotel,  
23 a livery stable, and an eating house also sprang up near the bridge in 1865,  
24 along with the post office and stage station; and

25 WHEREAS, large-scale settlement ensued and in the next twenty-five  
26 years there appeared roads, bridges, dams and irrigation canals that brought  
27 much of the Upper Snake River Valley under cultivation and in 1887, following  
28 construction of the Oregon Short Line, most of the railroad facilities were  
29 removed to Pocatello where the new line branched off, but Eagle Rock was fast  
30 becoming the commercial center of an agricultural empire; and

31 WHEREAS, in 1891 the town voted to change its name to Idaho Falls in ref-  
32 erence to rapids below the bridge. Some years later, construction of a re-  
33 taining wall for a hydroelectric power plant enhanced the rapids into falls.  
34 In 1895 the largest irrigation canal in the world, the Great Feeder, began  
35 diverting water from the Snake River and aided in converting tens of thou-  
36 sands of acres of desert into green farmland in the vicinity of Idaho Falls;  
37 and

38 WHEREAS, the area grew sugar beets, potatoes, peas, grains, and alfalfa  
39 and became one of the most productive regions of the United States; and

40 WHEREAS, in 1949, the Atomic Energy Commission opened the National Re-  
41 actor Testing Station in the desert west of the city. On December 20, 1951,  
42 a nuclear reactor produced useful electricity for the first time in history

1 and there have been more than fifty unique nuclear reactors built at the fa-  
2 cility for testing, though all but three are shut down now; and

3 WHEREAS, the Idaho National Laboratory (INL), as it is now known, re-  
4 mains a major economic engine for the city of Idaho Falls, employing more  
5 than 8,000 people and functioning as an internationally renowned research  
6 center. INL operates and manages the world-famous Advanced Test Reactor  
7 (ATR); and

8 WHEREAS, Idaho Falls serves as a regional hub for health care, retail  
9 business, culture, tourism and recreation in eastern Idaho; and

10 WHEREAS, Idaho Falls was named by *Business Week* as one of the 2010 "Best  
11 Places to Raise Kids." In addition, *Forbes.com* selected Idaho Falls as one  
12 of the "2010 Best Small Places for Business & Careers" and *Money.CNN.com* in-  
13 cluded Idaho Falls as one of its "Top 100 Cities in 2010."

14 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the members of the First Regular Ses-  
15 sion of the Sixty-third Idaho Legislature, the House of Representatives and  
16 the Senate concurring therein, that we honor and recognize the one hundred  
17 fiftieth anniversary of the building of the Eagle Rock bridge in 1865, the  
18 first bridge ever to span the Snake River and which started the settlement  
19 that would become the modern city of Idaho Falls.

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Re-  
21 becca Casper, Mayor of the City of Idaho Falls.