

February 22, 2007

Arkansas Senate honors the late Harry L. Oswald

The Arkansas Senate on Feb. 14 honored the late Harry L. Oswald, the first general manager of AECC and AECI, with a resolution highlighting his role as a rural electrification pioneer.

The resolution was sponsored by Sen. Mary Anne Salmon, D-North Little Rock. Attending the reading of the resolution were Oswald's daughters -- Harryette Graham and Suzanne Ross -- and their husbands, M.D. Graham and Dave Ross, and Oswald's grandson, Harry Oswald Mehlburger.

Speaking to the Senate after the resolution was read, Mehlburger said his grandfather's role in the rural electrification movement was "near and dear to his heart," adding that it "helped define him."

Oswald died on Dec. 18, 2006, at the age of 91.

The resolution is as follows.

SENATE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

In honor of the late Harry L. Oswald, who helped bring electricity to rural Arkansas through his tireless promotion of the electric cooperative program and who devoted his life to the betterment of his beloved state.

Subtitle

In honor of the late Harry L. Oswald, a rural electrification pioneer.

WHEREAS, Harry L. Oswald was a native Arkansan who worked tirelessly to improve the lives of all Arkansans, especially those in rural areas, by serving as a school teacher, school principal, mayor and leader of the electric cooperative movement; and

WHEREAS, Harry L. Oswald worked as field representative for the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) and helped secure funding for electric cooperatives in Arkansas during the early days of the rural electrification program; and

WHEREAS, Harry L. Oswald, as the first general manager of Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., (AECI) a statewide service organization for electric cooperatives, was instrumental in helping the cooperatives win crucial political battles that strengthened the electric cooperatives here; and

WHEREAS, Harry L. Oswald helped form Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation (AECC), a generation and transmission cooperative that owns all or portions of 11 power plants that serve more 460,000 members; and

WHEREAS, Harry L. Oswald was a devoted husband and father, an innovative businessman and a tireless promoter of the cooperatives and his beloved state:

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE EIGHTY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

That the Senate and the citizens of Arkansas express their profound gratitude to the late Harry L. Oswald for his steadfast support of education, for his dedication to the betterment of rural Arkansans by helping bring electricity to the state's farms and small towns and for his lifelong love of family, state and country.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the individual members of the Senate hereby express sincere condolences to the family of Mr. Harry L. Oswald, and upon adoption of this resolution, an appropriate copy shall be provided to the family of Mr. Oswald by the Secretary of the Senate.