

February 5, 2015

FROM: El Dean Holthus, Trustee, Ellen Rust Living Trust
9082 130 Road, Smith Center, KS 66967

TO: Transportation Committee
Kansas Senate

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 43, Naming of Highway K-8

Greetings:

The Trustees deeply appreciate the Kansas Legislature's support of the Home on the Range Site in past sessions by their passing of a resolution recognizing the 140th anniversary of the Cabin construction and another recognizing the 140th anniversary of the song.

Continuing in that appreciation of support we thank you for the opportunity to share our recommendation of approval of Senator Bower's Senate Bill 43 naming Kansas Highway K-8 as The Home on the Range Highway. This is the only paved road to the Home on the Range Site on which is located the Cabin built by Dr. Brewster Higley in 1872 and fully restored in 2013. Dr. Higley is the author of the State song of Kansas, Home on the Range, which is the most popular cowboy song around the world.

There are hundreds of visitors each year traveling, on K-8 south from Nebraska or north from US Highway 36. It is also an important farm to market and market to market highway being the straightest mileage from between Kansas and Nebraska. From 1918 to 1940 K-8 was the main north/south road through central Kansas; in 1940 it was truncated with most of the mileage though the center of the State being replaced by US Highway 281; the planners left 1+ miles from Kiowa to the Oklahoma line and these 16 miles we are requesting to be named. We then have 16 historical miles leading to a Kansas Historical Site which we feel well deserves the name The Home on the Range Highway.

There are many chapters to be shared when telling the Home the Range story with the latest being the restoration and furnishing of the Cabin and its re-dedication in October 2014. Senator Bowers, who has been a strong supporter of the Site, in introducing Bill 43 and this hearing are the first sentences of another chapter and if you submit a favorable recommendation to the full Senate on Bill 43 you will be able to say "We have written a paragraph in the Home on the Range story". This may seem quaint and colloquial to you but is important to the Trustees to have you understand this Site along with its own highway is for everyone to benefit and feel a sense of ownership in this little Cabin on the bank of West Beaver Creek, Pleasant Township, Smith County.

The Home on the Range Highway will lead to the only combination log/limestone cabin in the nation still on its original site. It is the only location where an artist can play a song on the site where it was written in the Cabin built by the author. I thank you for your time and would deeply appreciate your support in sending Bill 43 to the full Senate for their approval. Are there any questions?

El Dean Holthus