

STATE OF KANSAS



Senator Elaine Bowers

DISTRICT 36

MAJORITY WHIP

To Chairman Peterson and members of the Senate Transportation Committee:

It is my privilege to speak to you first on SB288 and introduce friends from Senate District #36 to bring forward the bill on behalf of the American Legions, Veterans and constituents of Marshall County. Representative Bill Pannbacker and myself received a letter signed by both commanders of the American Legions from Blue Rapids and Waterville in November with their proposal for naming a portion of a highway connecting the two towns. They have requested a 5-mile stretch of highway on US Highway 77 – west of the city limit of Blue Rapids to the east city limit of Waterville. The name of the highway would be: Cpl. Allen E. Oatney and SP4 Gene A. Myers Memorial Highway. Both were killed in action in Vietnam; Corporal Oatney in 1970 and SP4 Myers in 1969. Funding for the signs will be provided by the American Legions through private donations. As you hear the testimony from the folks with us today, you will see they have a well thought-out plan to work with the communities and even school students. They are aware of the cost from KDOT for both signs which includes the 50% additional cost to offset a portion of future replacement cost for an estimate of \$4140.00 in total. We also understand this is a carve out of five miles on a previously named highway known as the Prairie Parkway. My intern has researched the history and I have added it below. Signs will still exist at the beginning and end of Prairie Parkway with these two additional signs in Marshall County.

Representative Pannbacker has introduced a bill in the House with the only difference as the word Corporal is listed in full and not abbreviated as SB288 lists as Cpl. This is in an effort to save cost of the signs due to the size of the two words. We have attempted in this Senate version to list exactly what KDOT would print on the signs.

At this point, I am ready for questions however I know our friends from home are eager to speak to you about these two heroes from Marshall County and the significance of this signage to the communities.

Thank you.

Senator Elaine Bowers

**RESEARCH REPORT ON RE-NAMING A PORTION OF
“PRAIRIE PARKWAY” TO “CPL. ALLEN E. OATNEY AND
SP4 GENE A. MYERS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY”**

Upon my research, I discovered that in 1967, the highway of which a section that is seeking to be renamed was officially named the “Prairie Parkway.” This statute was originally part of HB1107. HB1107 also contained statutes to name two other highways: “The Chisholm Trail” and “The Lewis and Clark Trail.” Prairie Parkway has been segmented as so other portions of the highway have been renamed. The Kansas Department of Transportation reports that the signs indicating the end points of Prairie Parkway will not move, allowing for separate and new signs to indicate the end points of the proposed “Cpl. Allen E. Oatney and SP4 Gene A. Myers Memorial Highway.” I attempted to look for committee reports and minutes from 1967 as to discover the intent of and purpose for naming Prairie Parkway. However, no such records remain from that time.

Reported by:

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