

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 511

Commending the City of Bristol Chamber of Commerce on the occasion of its 100th anniversary.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 25, 2009
 Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 27, 2009

WHEREAS, the City of Bristol Chamber of Commerce is commended on the occasion of its 100th anniversary in 2009 for its service to the community; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bristol Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber) was first established in 1909 and originally had 40 members; and

WHEREAS, in 1911, the Chamber produced its first tourist information brochure, took a major role in the local and regional promotion of improved highways, and began successful efforts to have the city install the "White Way" system of lights on downtown State Street; and

WHEREAS, during World War I, the Chamber offered home support of the war effort, was the driving force behind the opening of a road between Bristol and Mountain City, and began urging the twin city government to enter an improvement program to prevent downtown flooding; and

WHEREAS, in the late 1920s, the Chamber realized the importance of an area airport and gave the project its full support; the Chamber also promoted the building of roads from Bristol to Bluff City and from Bristol to Gate City; and

WHEREAS, during the Depression years, the Chamber tried to ease the blow of bank failures by helping familiarize the public with the new Social Security law and other acts passed by Congress; and

WHEREAS, in the early 1940s, national defense and war aid efforts were the Chamber's primary concerns; this included cooperation in the establishment of the Navy shell loading plant and taking the lead in War Savings Bond drives; and

WHEREAS, in 1957, the Chamber helped bring to the area Sperry Farragut Plant, which manufactured component parts for missiles, as well as Raytheon Manufacturing Company, which built the Sparrow III missile; and

WHEREAS, in the 1960s, the Chamber worked for improvements to Bristol Memorial Hospital and supported the "City Planner" position, which served both Bristol, Tennessee, and Bristol, Virginia; the Chamber also became the first chamber in Tennessee or Virginia to be accredited by the United States Chamber of Commerce; and

WHEREAS, in 1971, the Chamber of Commerce voted to support the establishment of a medical school at East Tennessee State University and supported plans for construction of a shopping mall on Gate City Highway in 1973; and

WHEREAS, the Chamber announced the creation of a tourism program in 1985 to promote the cities of Bristol and the "Bristol First" campaign, a four-year economic development plan; and

WHEREAS, the Chamber partnered with Bristol, Tennessee Parks & Recreation and worked closely with the Tennessee Forest Service in 1988 to become a "Tree City USA" through the National Arbor Day Foundation; and

WHEREAS, in the 1990s, the Bristol Chamber of Commerce's Governmental Relations Council was reorganized; the historic Paramount Center for the Arts on State Street was restored to its original splendor; and Bristol, Virginia, and the Bristol Chamber of Commerce joined the Bristol Economic Partnership, creating the first joint effort of its kind in the twin city; and

WHEREAS, the Chamber was awarded a Five-Star Reaccreditation from the United States Chamber of Commerce in 2005, making it one of only 10 in the country to earn the highest attainable level; and

WHEREAS, the City of Bristol Chamber of Commerce has provided 100 years of dedicated and outstanding service to the City of Bristol; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly commend and congratulate the City of Bristol Chamber of Commerce on the occasion of its 100th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the City of Bristol Chamber of Commerce as an expression of the General Assembly's respect and admiration for its 100 years of service to the community.