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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 183

Offered January 19, 2016

*Commending Saunders Brothers, Inc.*

Patron—Bell, Richard P.

WHEREAS, in 2015, Saunders Brothers, Inc., a well-regarded and popular orchard, wholesale nursery, and farm market in Piney River, celebrated 100 years as a successful family-run business in Nelson County; and

WHEREAS, the company was started in 1915 by five brothers, Sam, Dick, Doc, William, and Massie Saunders; as young boys they worked as a team and pooled the money they made from selling rabbits and working in farm fields, forming a family partnership; and

WHEREAS, the Saunders brothers worked hard in the first years of the company's existence, maintaining and cultivating farm land in the Piney River area of Nelson County; during the Great Depression, some of them moved away to find work, while others kept the operation afloat; and

WHEREAS, apple orchards were a major source of income for the Saunders Brothers company during the 1940s; when the siblings discovered that peaches were a more valuable crop, they planted a 70-acre peach orchard, which for many years was the heart of the Saunders Brothers operation; and

WHEREAS, in 1947, Paul Saunders, the son of one of the five founding brothers, successfully propagated boxwood bushes; Saunders Brothers eventually planted 20 acres of boxwoods, which became another important part of the family business; and

WHEREAS, seeing an increasing demand for container-grown plants, members of the Saunders family collected discarded one-gallon metal cans from around Nelson County to use for planting; they eventually switched to plastic containers at the request of their customers; and

WHEREAS, today, the Saunders Brothers' nursery sells thousands of annuals, perennials, trees, and shrubs in its wholesale operation; boxwoods grown by Saunders Brothers remain a staple of the company's business; and

WHEREAS, additionally, Saunders Brothers operates a retail market during the growing season; shoppers can choose from mouth-watering seasonal fruits and vegetables, a large variety of canned goods, and made-in-Virginia items from the market's kitchen section; and

WHEREAS, Saunders Brothers was recognized as the 2015 Agribusiness of the Year by the Virginia Agribusiness Council for its many outstanding contributions to the industry; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Saunders Brothers, Inc., on the occasion of its 100th anniversary in 2015; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Paul Saunders, a second-generation partner in Saunders Brothers, Inc., as an expression of the General Assembly's congratulations and admiration for its many years as a successful nursery, farm market, and wholesale grower in the Commonwealth.