**A** **SENATE RESOLUTION**

TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE OUTSTANDING ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE CAPITAL CITY LAKE MURRAY COUNTRY REGIONAL TOURISM BOARD AND TO CELEBRATE THE BOARD UPON THE THIRTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS SUCCESSFUL WORK IN SHOWCASING THE REGION.

Whereas, Capital City Lake Murray Country (CCLMC) Regional Tourism Board, established in 1981, is celebrating thirty-five years in business during April 2016; and

Whereas, the organization’s mission is to promote tourism and the region’s great outdoors for Richland, Lexington, Newberry, and Saluda counties and to market and promote special events that will bring visitors into the region and increase the tourism revenues for our State and region; and

Whereas, CCLMC has generated over 941 million dollars in tourism revenues for the State since 1981; and

Whereas, in 1983, the organization established the brand, “Lake Murray Country‑Jewel of South Carolina,” in its marketing and promotional efforts, which still holds true today with local businesses and media outlets adopting the brand for continued promotion; and

Whereas, CCLMC uses an average of forty-nine percent of its budget directly to marketing tourism for the region; and

Whereas, every year CCLMC continues to showcase the beauty of the historical sites and recreational facilities to thousands of golfers, motorcoach and tour operators, fishing and vacationing families; and

Whereas, numerous trade shows have been attended over the years to showcase the region and lure potential business into the area; and

Whereas, throughout the years, the region has been marketed through television, radio, print media, digital online ads, and billboards; and

Whereas, CCLMC has been the recipient of numerous awards for generating $25,754,745 in economic impact as a result of the 2014 Forrest Wood Cup with 43,000 out-of-town visitors from forty states along with a statewide barbeque competition and outdoor show. This collaborative effort with some twelve community organizations contributing time and service is the largest event to be held in conjunction with the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center and Colonial Life Arena; and

Whereas, CCLMC was presented with the 2008 South Carolina Governor’s Cup on Tourism for the production of the 2008 Forrest Wood Cup and Fantasy Fishing Competition that brought in over 65,172 total visitors; and

Whereas, to ensure safety for boaters on Lake Murray the organization was successful in obtaining funds to maintain and provide reference lights on Lake Murray, and the project was completed in early 1990; and

Whereas, CCLMC has supported and created many projects and events related to tourism, including the relocation and restoration of the historic Lorick House; and

Whereas, as a result of direct media buys and various shows, the Lake Murray area was presented to 578 million households nationally and internationally through television in 2014‑2015 alone; and

Whereas, CCLMC has spearheaded numerous television airings that have showcased the Lake Murray area. In 2015, the FLW Collegiate Event held at Lake Murray aired on *MatchSports*, *NBC Sports*, and FLW Outdoors.com; and

Whereas, the “ Come Alive” TV Campaign has continued for almost eight years and its thirty second television ad aired in neighboring markets, including Charlotte, Asheville, Raleigh, and Savannah and through various tournament events across the United States; and

Whereas, the South Carolina Outdoors Show featuring Lake Murray aired in Myrtle Beach, Florence, Charleston, Orangeburg, Sumter, Greensboro, Winston‑Salem, Wilmington, and Raleigh‑Durham, in 140,000 households a week; and

Whereas, full-page magazine ads have appeared in national and regional tourism and travel publications, including *USA Today Hunt & Fish*, *Travel 50 & Beyond*, *B.A.S.S.* magazine, *Sports Destination* magazine, *Adventure Outdoors*, *The Local Palate*, *Southern Living*, *Discover SC*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Woman’s Day*, *Bird Watchers Digest*, and *Carolina Living*; and

Whereas, the organization hosted North Carolina, Virginia, and South Carolina motorcoach conferences in August 2015 and fall 2008 with more than 778 tour operators visiting the region and experiencing the group attractions, resulting in over 327 motorcoaches returning to the region; and

Whereas, numerous outdoor press writers from across the United States have been lured to the region to experience the tourism attractions and returned to publish articles, and produce radio shows and blogs to assist in spreading the efforts of marketing; and

Whereas, over the years, the Columbia/Lake Murray region has been featured on numerous special shows, including WLOS Asheville’s *Road Trippin’* show, and SyFy Channel, and the *Spirit of America* show, which named Lake Murray’s Fourth of July Celebration one of the top-ten patriotic events in the United States; and

Whereas, CCLMC represents nine cities and towns in the region on Trip Advisor, the number one travel site for visitors planning trips in the world; and

Whereas, *Boating* magazine named Lake Murray as the Best Place to Boat and Live in the United States in 2012; and

Whereas, through paid advertising and marketing efforts, the organization produced over 78.1 million digital media impressions last year; and

Whereas, CCLMC has supported and created numerous projects and events related to tourism, including Lake Murray’s Fourth of July Celebration, recognized as a top-twenty event in the southeast by the Southeast Tourism Society; and

Whereas, CCLMC created a fundraising event thirteen years ago to raise financial support from the community for the fireworks celebration each year in July and the Taste of Lake Murray event and has raised over one million dollars in that time for these events; and

Whereas, since 1999, the organization has lured thirty-one national and regional fishing tournaments to Lake Murray, resulting in over 12.8 million dollars being paid out in cash prizes to the participants; and

Whereas, CCLMC has maintained a comprehensive Call to Action website with over thirty-two hundred pages of information for visitors and residents to help in planning vacations and outings in the region; and

Whereas, CCLMC has reached out to statewide partners through numerous partnerships to promote the great outdoors, and the recent creation of Mountains to Midlands Golf has lured golfers from Canadian and Ohioian golf markets to the region; and

Whereas, currently the organization is filming a portion of a new television ad campaign in partnership with the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism and others to promote Undiscovered SC; and

Whereas, creative marketing of Lake Murray’s natural attraction, the purple martins, branded by the organization in early 2001 as the Purple Martin Phenomenon, has resulted in visitors coming from across the United States during the summer months to experience this unique, one-of-a-kind attraction; and

Whereas, the numbers continue to increase in the marketing of the region through social media with CCLMC reaching over sixty-six thousand followers on Facebook; and

Whereas, over the years, the organization has continued to utilize the South Carolina welcome centers through placement of promotional boards at the Fort Mill and North Augusta welcome centers to greet and lure approaching visitors coming into the region; and

Whereas, the visitors center operated by the organization greeted visitors from twenty-three foreign countries last year and continues to see visitors from all fifty states walking into the center for information on the region; and

Whereas, the filming and production of a documentary through AtlantaVideo360 Productions for SCETV and potentially PBS will showcase the lifestyle of lake living, the history, and the economic and fishing impact of Lake Murray; and

Whereas, all these accomplishments and efforts of the organization have been successful with a staff of seven or less employees over the years. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate:

That the members of the South Carolina Senate, by this resolution, recognize and honor the outstanding accomplishments of the Capital City Lake Murray Country Regional Tourism Board and celebrate the board upon the thirty-fifth anniversary of its successful work in showcasing the region.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to the Capital City Lake Murray Country Regional Tourism Board.

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