

PROCLAMATION

Observation of Union Pacific “Big Boy No. 4014 Day” In Waller County, Texas

WHEREAS, as we celebrate the many historical milestones of our community, today we come together to recognize the importance of our railroad heritage and the significant role the arrival of the first rail transportation played in the growth and development of Hempstead and the surrounding area; and

WHEREAS, the Houston and Texas Central Railway (H&TC), a predecessor of today’s Union Pacific Railroad, constructed the first railroad line to Hempstead, which became operational on June 29, 1858, just two years after the founding of the town and fifteen years before the organization of Waller County. That momentous occasion was marked by the arrival of the first train from Houston carrying an estimated 500-600 passengers met by a jubilant crown of dignitaries and people from all over the state; and

WHEREAS, the availability of rail transportation enabled Hempstead to become a distribution center between the Texas interior and the Gulf Coast, stabilized the town, and ensured the future growth of the community. The railroad was extended to Navasota by August 1859 with intermediate stations at Howth and Courtney, and by 1861 train service had been extended to Brenham; and

WHEREAS, Union Pacific has been serving communities nationwide for 158 years. In 1941 Union Pacific received delivery of the first of twenty-five Big Boys, the largest steam locomotives in the world, built exclusively for them—an example of how they have seen a need and taken steps to fulfill that need. These huge locomotives were designed with a 4-8-8-4 wheel arrangement that allowed them to navigate curves and the steep tracks between Ogden, Utah, and Cheyenne, Wyoming. Big Boy No. 4014 has been completely restored in the Union Pacific Steam Shop in Cheyenne, and is the only one of the eight remaining engines that is fully operational while the other seven are on public display in museums and parks around the country; and

WHEREAS, today we are honored to have been chosen as one of the brief whistle-stops on No. 4014’s 2024 nine-state “Big Boy Heartland of America Tour” and join Union Pacific in celebration of railroad heritage as they continue their journey.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT PROCLAIMED THAT WE, the County Judge and Commissioners of Waller County, Texas do hereby recognize and observe October 4, 2024, as “Big Boy No. 4014 Day.”

Signed this 2nd day of October, 2024

Carbett “Trey” J. Duhon III, County Judge

John A. Amsler, Commissioner Pct. 1

Walter E. Smith, Commissioner Pct. 2

Kendric D. Jones, Commissioner Pct. 3

Justin Beckendorff, Commissioner Pct. 4