

**Senator Dennis E. Stowell** proposes the following substitute bill:

**ESCALANTE HERITAGE HOLE-IN-THE-ROCK**

**CENTER JOINT RESOLUTION**

2010 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Dennis E. Stowell**

House Sponsor: Michael E. Noel

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**

This joint resolution of the Legislature expresses support for the construction of a Heritage Center in Escalante, Utah, and for improvements to the Hole-in-the-Rock Road, to highlight the journey of the San Juan/Hole-in-the-Rock colonizing expedition during the winter of 1879-80 and to preserve the history of the most difficult colonizing expedition in all of the West.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This resolution:

- ▶ expresses support for the Escalante Heritage Center's effort to preserve the history of the Hole-in-the-Rock pioneers, the history of the early explorations of the Escalante Valley, and the settlement of the town Escalante in 1876 through the heroic efforts of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to follow the call of their leader to colonize and tame a part of the frontier; and

- ▶ expresses support for improving safety and year round travel on the Hole-in-the-Rock Road.

- ▶ **Special Clauses:**

None



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*Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

WHEREAS, in 1879, citizens of towns throughout Southern Utah answered the call of John Taylor, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to colonize one of the most remote parts of the Territory of Utah;

WHEREAS, taking what these colonizers thought would be a shortcut to the San Juan area, they traveled through the frontier town of Escalante, which was settled in 1876, to the Colorado River where they blasted and chiseled out a road in the crack of the canyon wall, descending one thousand feet to the Colorado River;

WHEREAS, while this was the most difficult part of the trek, it was only one of many difficulties they experienced before reaching their destination and establishing a settlement at Bluff, Utah;

WHEREAS, what they thought would be a six-week journey took six months;

WHEREAS, the road these individuals created on their journey became the first road in the Territory of Utah, traveling from west to east, to be funded by the Legislature, though it cost only a few thousand dollars to purchase dynamite to blast through the walls of the Hole-in-the-Rock;

WHEREAS, during the winter of 1879-80, 250 men, women, and children, trailing over 1,000 head of livestock, blazed a trail through 200 miles of the most rugged terrain in the West;

WHEREAS, Elizabeth Decker, a member of the colonizing party described it as ". . . the roughest country you or anybody else ever saw. It's nothing in the world but rocks and holes, hills and hollows";

WHEREAS, during their six-month journey, the San Juan colonizers were tempered like fine steel for the formidable task of nurturing relations with the Native Americans, tilling the land, and establishing law and order;

WHEREAS, in reaching the San Juan area, the colonizers demonstrated unwavering faith and devotion to duty and set the standard for future generations;

WHEREAS, in 2002, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints donated nine acres of land in Escalante to build a Heritage Center, and also donated a water meter, which was critical in allowing the project to move ahead;

WHEREAS, in 2007, the Richfield office of the Utah Department of Transportation

57 granted the Escalante Heritage Center \$125,000 to do a feasibility study, which was performed  
58 by Landmark Design of Salt Lake City and completed in 2008;

59 WHEREAS, in 2009, the Salt Lake City office of the Utah Department of  
60 Transportation granted the Escalante Heritage Center \$500,000 to build the first of four phases  
61 of the project;

62 WHEREAS, the Escalante Heritage Center is a nonprofit corporation engaged in raising  
63 private and public funds to construct and maintain a center dedicated to preserving the history  
64 and heritage of the Hole-in-the-Rock pioneers and the Escalante area;

65 WHEREAS, the state transportation improvement program includes \$200,000 for  
66 preliminary engineering to improve Hole-in-the-Rock Road;

67 WHEREAS, the Garfield County Commission fully supports this endeavor and is the  
68 government sponsor of the project;

69 WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Council of Escalante fully support the Escalante  
70 Heritage Center in its endeavor to preserve the history and heritage of the area;

71 WHEREAS, the Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area project has declared the  
72 building of the Escalante Heritage Center its top priority project;

73 WHEREAS, the Escalante Heritage Center Board has received letters of support from  
74 officials of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the offices of both Senators Hatch  
75 and Bennett, and the office of Congressman Jim Matheson;

76 WHEREAS, the Escalante Heritage Center Board has the support of officials of the  
77 Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument, who feel that a science center on one side of  
78 the town of Escalante and a history center on the other side would represent bookends of  
79 learning for everyone visiting the area; and

80 WHEREAS, Garfield County has received a letter of support from the Grand Staircase  
81 Escalante National Monument for road improvements:

82 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah  
83 expresses its support for the Escalante Heritage/Hole-in-the-Rock Center Board's efforts to  
84 preserve the history of the Hole-in-the-Rock pioneers and the settlement of the Escalante area,  
85 and to construct a building in which to tell the story of these historic pioneers and to improve  
86 the road over which they traveled.

87 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Escalante

88 Heritage Center Board, the Garfield County Commission, the Mayor and City Council of  
89 Escalante City, the Richfield and Salt Lake City offices of the Utah Department of  
90 Transportation, Landmark Design, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and to the  
91 members of Utah's congressional delegation.