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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, In 1904, mining experts from the St. Paul Coal Company discovered a vast vein of bituminous coal in eastern Bureau County that was almost unequaled in quality, and instantly began to sink the State's largest coal mine in what was to become the Village of Cherry; the mine and the Village were named after James Cherry, former Seatonville mayor, who was the regional superintendent of mines; and

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WHEREAS, In April of 1905, the Village of Cherry was incorporated; by June of 1905, the St. Paul Coal Company had invested \$200,000 in developing the mine and the Village to house its workers; and

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WHEREAS, The mine company's plan for the new Village called for a park, a school, a bank, and several general stores; expecting Cherry to be its crowning jewel, the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railway Company built a first-class railroad station two blocks from the main business district; the coal company built a fifty-room hotel and fifty modern model homes and sold 120 acres of land for building and business purposes as the Village began to grow across the prairie; and

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WHEREAS, In its heyday, Cherry consisted of 125 company houses and 250 private homes and had a population of over 2500; and

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WHEREAS, Disaster struck on November 13, 1909; hay that had been brought down to feed the mules stabled in the third level of the mine caught fire, and the quickly spreading fire resulted in the loss of 259 lives; on November 20, twenty-one men were found alive and rescued from the mine; no other miners were found alive, and when fire broke out again on November 25, a decision was made to seal the mine; on February 1, 1910, the

1 mine was unsealed and the last of the bodies were removed; and

2 WHEREAS, The St. Paul Coal Company reopened the mine in the
3 latter part of 1910 and developed and worked the third vein
4 until 1927, when changes in the mining industry made the mine
5 unprofitable to operate; and

6 WHEREAS, After closure of the mine, the company acres were
7 sold and converted to farmland, and the population of the
8 Village dwindled and has since stabilized at approximately 500
9 people; therefore, be it

10 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
11 NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
12 we congratulate the Village of Cherry on the occasion of its
13 100th anniversary and convey our warmest regards to its
14 residents; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
16 presented to the Village of Cherry as an expression of our
17 esteem.