



1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Gudmund B. "Sonny" Jessen, Jr. of Hennepin died on  
3 October 5, 2003; and

4 WHEREAS, Mr. Jessen was born on a farm in Putnam County,  
5 north of Hennepin, on March 15, 1933; he attended the Nash and  
6 Durley one room school house; he graduated from the Hennepin  
7 Township High School in 1950; and

8 WHEREAS, Mr. Jessen was inducted for service in 1953 and  
9 took basic training at Camp Roberts, California; he served in  
10 intelligence at Heidelberg, Germany during the Korean War; he  
11 was promoted to sergeant and discharged in February 1955; and

12 WHEREAS, Mr. Jessen became precinct committeeman for the  
13 Democratic Party in 1955 and held that position until his  
14 death; he also was County Chairman of the Democratic Party for  
15 16 years; he was presented a Certificate of Appreciation plaque  
16 for Outstanding and Dedicated Service by the Illinois  
17 Democratic County Chairman's Association on August 15, 2002;  
18 and

19 WHEREAS, Mr. Jessen was elected Justice of the Peace of  
20 Hennepin/Senachwine Townships in 1960; he was the youngest  
21 person in the State of Illinois to serve in that office; he  
22 held the position until it was terminated; he married 17  
23 couples in the now Pulsifer House, which was where he resided  
24 until the farmland was sold for the J&L Steel plant; and

25 WHEREAS, Mr. Jessen farmed the Hennepin prairies all of his  
26 life; he was a Marshall-Putnam Farm Bureau member; he served on  
27 the M-P Oil Board and was chairman of the Executive Committee  
28 of the M-P Extension Council; and

29 WHEREAS, Mr. Jessen was the past president of the Putnam

1 County National Farmers Organization; he was commissioner of  
2 the Hennepin Drainage & Levy District until 2001; he was also a  
3 member of Ducks Unlimited; he helped form the Hennepin  
4 Sportsman Club and was club president; at one time he raised  
5 turkeys and pheasants to be released around Putnam County; and

6 WHEREAS, Mr. Jessen was one of the original members of the  
7 Hennepin Betterment Association; he served on the Water  
8 District Board and Zoning Board for Hennepin; he was also a  
9 lifetime member of the Putnam County Historical Society; and

10 WHEREAS, Mr. Jessen was commander of the Hennepin American  
11 Legion; he also belonged to the Hennepin Independent Order of  
12 Odd Fellows; he has held all offices in that Order; and

13 WHEREAS, Mr. Jessen was elected Hennepin Township Clerk in  
14 the 1960s and still held that office at his death; he became  
15 Putnam County Clerk and Recorder in September 1987 and held  
16 that office until his retirement on November 30, 2002; he was a  
17 member of the Illinois Township Clerks; and

18 WHEREAS, Interstate Route 180 includes a bridge that spans  
19 the Illinois River at Hennepin; therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
21 NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE  
22 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that the Interstate Route 180 bridge  
23 across the Illinois River at Hennepin be designated the Gudmund  
24 "Sonny" Jessen Bridge; and be it further

25 RESOLVED, That the Department of Transportation is  
26 requested to erect, at suitable locations, consistent with  
27 State and federal regulations, appropriate plaques or signs  
28 giving notice of the name; and be it further

29 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be

1 presented to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of  
2 Transportation, the Secretary of the Illinois Department of  
3 Transportation, and the family of Gudmund B. Jessen Jr.