2011 SENATE APPROPRIATIONS

SB 2291

2011 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Senate Appropriations Committee
Harvest Room, State Capitol

SB 2291
01-27-11
Job # 13535

☐ Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature Alice Delzer

Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

An Appropriation to the state historical society for a grant for operating costs relating to the Lawrence Welk homestead.

Minutes: See attached testimony.

Chairman Holmberg called the committee to order on Thursday, January 27, 2011 at 11:00 am in reference to SB 2291. All committee members were present except V. Chair Grindberg. Joe Morrissette, OMB and Sara Chamberlin, Legislative Council were present.

Senator Erbele, District 28, Lehr,ND introduced SB 2291 and stated he is one of the sponsors of the Bill. He stated we are going back in time to our pioneer roots, which is not that long ago. He talked about the fame of Lawrence Welk, from a homesteader's shack to Hollywood, to become nationally known. It is an incredible story, and we need to keep this heritage alive. We are here today to seek a little funding for the operating costs relating to the Lawrence Welk homestead. Other than Teddy Roosevelt, he may be the most well known celebrity from North Dakota. Mr. Welk's neice is here today with us. They have operated on a volunteer basis and with the pool of people available going down and the age of volunteers going up, there are few left to continue on. They have had to cut hours, and have been open on a call only basis, which is not good for tourism. As you come in from SD on highway 83 it will be one of the first sites you would stop at. The Germans from Russia have organized tours to the southern part of Emmons County, where many of them are from, to see the homestead, beautiful Catholic churches in the area, and it is a wonderful tour. There is some real potential to provide some economic impact to southern North Dakota. The funding, if we approve this bill will pay for 2 people to work at the homestead from 10 t0 4 from Memorial Day to Labor Day, an extra for signage and promotional material. And we may be able to look to the ND Historical Society in the future for some funding regarding this issue. I support this bill and hope you will consider it.(Meter 6.29)

Representative Mike Brandenburg, District 28, Edgeley, ND testified in favor of SB 2291. He stated he spent time as a youngster in Emmons County near the Lawrence Welk homestead. He stated the people there are very dedicated to keep the heritage alive, they explain the history well, and give excellent tours. It is important to keep the heritage alive for our younger generation. We have an opportunity here to give ND a lift.

Al Wolf, Attorney, Bismarck, ND testified in favor of SB 2291 and provided testimony attached # 1. He stated that two of Lawrence Welk's nieces, Rosemary Schaefbauer and Evelyn Schwab are here today. He stated he grew up near the Lawrence Welk homestead and testified in favor of the passage of SB 2291. (Meter 17.37)

Allan Burke, Publisher Emeritus of the Emmons County Record testified in favor of SB 2291 and Testimony attached # 3. He suggested it would be a great site to develop a tourism information point and interpretive center as there is not one from Pierre, SD to Interstate 94 in North Dakota. It is also representative of the Germans from Russia. I also have a letter from **Chad Williams, President Linton Chamber of Commerce Testimony** attached #3 in support of SB 2291. He also mentioned Michael Miller, but no testimony was submitted. (Meter 23.10) He also provided the Emmons County Guide Testimony attached # 4.

Merl Paaverud, Director of Historical Society stated he supports the Bill. He testified in favor of SB 2291 Testimony attached # 5 This funding would help in that long-range plan that we do to help people with their projects.

Senator Warner Do you have resources adequate for the planning portion of this? He was told they would work with the governing body to apply for a grant and funding for that purpose. If it should get moved and not be on it's original foundation, would that affect your ability to raise the money for this project. He was told that they would push very hard to keep it at it's original location.

Rosemary Schaefbauer,Niece of Lawrence Welk thanked all who talked and invited the committee to come and check it out.

Senator Krebsbach had questions about the children of Lawrence Welk. She was told that Donna is in Montana, Larry and Shirley are both in California.

Chairman Holmberg asked if anyone else wanted to testify. There was no more testimony. He announced that the same subcommittee as SB 2018 would meet on this bill. That consists of V. Chair Grindberg and Senator Erbele. He closed the hearing on SB 2291.

2011 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Senate Appropriations Committee
Harvest Room, State Capitol

SB 2291
02-16-2011
Job # 14626

☐ Conference Committee

Committee Clerk Signature Alice Dilzer

Explanation or reason for introduction of bill/resolution:

The Lawrence Welk Homestead Bill.

Minutes: You may make reference to "attached testimony."

Chairman Holmberg called the committee to order at 3:15 pm in reference to SB 2291.Tammy R. Dolan, OMB and Brady Larson, Legislative Council were present.

Chairman Holmberg made comments regarding the fact that two years ago on this date we had 42 bills and now we have 62 bills but remember they had a week longer to get them to us. He complemented Senator Kilzer on his presentation on the floor regarding SB 2003. The question had been asked about the salary that they thought all state officials got the 3 and 3 but you need to remember that last time we passed the law saying that salary will jump up in 2011 and in 2012 so that's why there was that huge increase but that was based upon statute passed two years ago. He informed the committee that they will be passing out several bills today and tomorrow. We will address SB 2291. Even though we haven't finished the Historical Society it is the Lawrence Welk $25,000.00; everyone agrees to do a do not pass because it is going in that other bill. Could we have a motion?

Senator Robinson moved Do Not Pass. Seconded by Senator Wardner. A Roll Call vote was taken. Yea: 11 Nay: 1 Absent: 1. Senator Krebsbach will carry the bill. Hearing was closed on SB 2291.

Date: 2-16-11
Roll Call Vote # 1

2011 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ROLL CALL VOTES
BILL/RESOLUTION NO. 2291

Senate Appropriations Committee

☐ Check here for Conference Committee

Legislative Council Amendment Number _____

Action Taken: ☐ Do Pass ☒ Do Not Pass ☐ Amended ☐ Adopt Amendment

☐ Rerefer to Appropriations ☐ Reconsider

Motion Made By Robinson Seconded By Wardner

Senators	Yes	No	Senators	Yes	No
Chairman Holmberg	✓		Senator Warner	✓	
Senator Bowman		✓	Senator O'Connell	✓	
Senator Grindberg	A		Senator Robinson	✓	
Senator Christmann	✓				
Senator Wardner	✓				
Senator Kilzer	✓				
Senator Fischer	✓				
Senator Krebsbach	✓				
Senator Erbele	✓				
Senator Wanzek	✓				

Total (Yes) 11 No 1

Absent 1

Floor Assignment Krebsbach

If the vote is on an amendment, briefly indicate intent:

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2291: Appropriations Committee (Sen. Holmberg, Chairman) recommends **DO NOT PASS** (11 YEAS, 1 NAYS, 1 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2291 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2011 TESTIMONY

SB 2291

TESTIMONY BEFORE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

JANUARY 27, 2011

BY: ALBERT A. WOLF
WHEELER WOLF LAW FIRM

Chairman Hoberg and Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee:

My name is Al Wolf of the Wheeler Wolf law firm in Bismarck, North Dakota. I have been practicing law in North Dakota for 50 years, and have been involved from the early days of the establishment of the Pioneer Heritage, Inc., and restoration of the Lawrence Welk homestead near Strasburg, North Dakota. I have served on the Board of Directors of Pioneer Heritage for many years, and in recent years as an advisor to the board, enabling the board to continue having board meetings without relying on my presence at those meetings.

I grew up on the Adam Wolf farm, located approximately three and a half miles northeast of the Welk homestead.

My testimony materials include a proclamation issued by Governor Edward T. Schafer, proclaiming the week of June 5-11, 1995, as "Lawrence Welk Week". It was at that time that Highway 83 from the South Dakota line through Emmons County was named the "Lawrence Welk Highway". Signs have been maintained by the State Highway Department with that designation since that date. I was involved in the two-day celebration at that time in Bismarck and Strasburg surrounding that event. I recall that we had Donna Welk, Lawrence Welk's daughter, then from Boise, Idaho present, along with the first champagne lady from Texas, and Margaret Herron, the secretary and then long-time manger of the Lawrence Welk operations from California.

The Pioneer Heritage Board of Directors, primarily from the Strasburg and Bismarck area, were involved initially in the restoration of the Welk homestead for public viewing, with some financial help from the Lawrence Welk Orchestra Foundation. Since then, most of the costs of maintenance of the building and the operations of the homestead for public viewing have been handled by the Pioneer Heritage personnel, with local people involved.

Thus far, the heart and soul of Pioneer Heritage, Inc., has been the two nieces of Lawrence Welk, that is daughters of Lawrence Welk's brother Michael. He resided at the homestead for some time before moving in to Strasburg. In the late 1950's and early 1960's after Lawrence Welk's show went on national television, he spent a couple of weeks in Strasburg visiting his brother and four widowed sisters who resided there, along with many nieces and nephews.

To review the more current operations, we can go back to 2002, when the supporters of the homestead program were younger and able to staff the homestead for visitors, the attendance during the summer season was over 3,000 people, reduced to 2,500 by 2004, and then reduced below 1,200 over the last couple years when they were open only four days a week during the summer. They were down to about 1,000 attendance this last year when visitation to the homestead was by appointment only.

If some of the board members and supporters are able to attend today, they can tell the committee with greater detail how the operations have gone over the years. They can tell why they may be looking for help if the Welk homestead is to be maintained as a tourist attraction in the future.

It is hoped that Senate Bill 2291 will provide funds for use in the regular operation of the Welk homestead as a tourist attraction for this biennium, during which time, hopefully, a long-term plan may be devised with the State Historical Society/Heritage Center and others for the maintenance and operations of the Welk homestead for public viewing.

During these many years, Germans from Russia have given strong support to the Welk homestead in their attempt to preserve the heritage of the German Russians to this country, and the NDSU Germans from Russia program, chaired by Dr. Michael Miller, a Strasburt native, has been focused on the continued reference to the Welk homestead as a symbol of the German Russian heritage.

The Strasburg committee has been aggressively maintaining and preserving itself and the institutions and facilities with historical perspectives. The Church of St. Peter and Paul rises over the prairie horizons as you approach the city, with great stature as a preserved and restored European looking church with great beauty and dignity.

The Blue Room, where Lawrence Welk began performing his music at wedding dances and other affairs, burned down two years before the Strasburg Centennial celebration, but was rebuilt with contributions of over $100,000 towards that goal, and the entrepreneurship of one retired farmer who spent over $600,000 rebuilding, improving, and enlarging the Blue Room to a very modern facility that attracts a customer base far and wide.

A beautiful Veterans Park has been established on main street, and school facilities have been maintained at a high level throughout the years.

While the residents of the community cherish the heritage that the Welk homestead preserves, younger generations are no longer as personally committed to support the "tourist value" of that facility, which necessitates a sharing of responsibilities on a broader basis throughout the state of North Dakota.

I have reams of file documents from over the years when various activities took place regarding the maintenance of the homestead, from which I can provide information to committee members upon request.

EDWARD T. SCHAFER
GOVERNOR

State of North Dakota

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
600 E. BOULEVARD – GROUND FLOOR
BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA 58505-0001
(701) 224-2200

PROCLAMATION

Lawrence Welk was born on the 11th day of March, in 1903, and developed his musical talent, entertainment abilities, and exemplary lifestyle as a youngster in rural North Dakota.

Mr. Welk gained national recognition as the outstanding entertainer for many years in the major ballrooms of the country and on national television.

The people of North Dakota and music lovers throughout the country and the world came to appreciate Lawrence Welk and his "Champagne Music."

Lawrence Welk, his wife Fern, and the entire Welk family maintained a commitment to family values and wholesome entertainment that was so consistent with his Germans From Russia heritage.

He and the Welk family assured the world of his ongoing ties to North Dakota by making various contributions in the state and by donating the rights to his papers and musical work to North Dakota State University for the benefit of future generations. In 1961, the state named him a recipient of the Theodore Roosevelt Rough Rider Award, and in 1965, NDSU awarded him an honorary Doctor of Music degree.

The Lawrence Welk family, friends, and relatives from North Dakota and elsewhere joined together with Pioneer Heritage, Inc. in the restoration and maintenance of the Ludwig and Christina (Schwahn) Welk Homestead where Lawrence Welk spent his early years near Strasburg. Visitors to the Homestead can learn about North Dakota's Germans From Russia history, culture, and folklore and renew their interest in the Lawrence Welk heritage.

As part of the official proclamation of Lawrence Welk Week in North Dakota, the road to the Welk Homestead, U.S. Highway 83, in Emmons County through Strasburg to the South Dakota line, is being named the Lawrence Welk Highway.

During this special week we welcome members of the Welk family and friends back to North Dakota and join with them in celebrating the successes and pleasures associated with Lawrence Welk and his music.

For these reasons, I proclaim the week of June 5-11, 1995, as

"LAWRENCE WELK WEEK"

in North Dakota.

Edward T. Schafer
EDWARD T. SCHAFER
Governor

ATTEST:
Alvin A. Jaeger
Secretary of State
By Robert K. Schaible
Deputy

Th. .'orum, Fargo, ND
June 6, 1995, page B-1

Road dedicated to Lawrence Welk

By Dale Wetzel
Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. – Visitors to Lawrence Welk's boyhood home soon will be able to drive along a stretch of road named for the bandleader.

On Monday, Gov. Ed Schafer signed a proclamation that designates U.S. Highway 83 in Emmons County as the "Lawrence Welk Highway."

The road runs through Welk's hometown of Strasburg, east of the farmstead where he was brought up.

It has been restored as a museum honoring Welk and the heritage of the area; it was extensively settled by ethnic Germans who emigrated from Russia, beginning in the late 1800s.

The proclamation sets aside this week to honor the bandleader, who died three years ago.

His daughter, Donna Welk Mack of Boise, Idaho, and Jayne Walton Rosen, a former singer and dancer in Welk's band, attended Monday's ceremony in the Capitol, along with a number of Welk cousins.

"Even though at one time, his entire band walked out on him ... Yet, that courage and perseverance kept his dream alive."

Donna Welk Mack
Lawrence Welk's daughter

Mack recalled her father's early hurdles to success.

"He continued to work hard. Even though at one time, his entire band walked out on him because they felt he was too much of a hick to ever make it in the music business," she said. "Yet that courage and perseverance kept his dream alive."

Green-and-white signs displaying the road's new name will be posted soon at the north and south borders of Emmons County, said Ray Zink, chief engineer for the Department of Transportation.

Emmons County is in south-central North Dakota, southeast of Bismarck.

The Missouri River forms its western border.

The ceremony was scheduled to coincide with a Bismarck reception Monday night hosted by the North Dakota State University Libraries, where Welk's papers are kept.

The school gave him an honorary doctorate in 1965.

Mack presented Schafer with a white conductor's baton, inscribed "Musically Yours, Lawrence Welk," and a boxed set of music.

Welk's band became widely known through broadcasts of a weekly television show.

Welk and his family "maintained a commitment to the family values and wholesome entertainment that was so consistent with his Germans from Russia heritage," Schafer said.

Welk: Visitors search out Strasburg

FROM PAGE 1A

Even now Strasburg receives frequent visits from wandering tourists, straggling past to see a part of the musical legend.

And that, said collection expert Charlotte Cox, is something Strasburg — and the rest of the North Dakota fans — doesn't want to forget now.

"The more recognition Lawrence Welk receives as a native, the more people will realize we still have a nice collection and can take pride in the state," Cox said.

The Welk collection includes everything from former accordians to photographs to a bubble machine.

Welk's legacy — from his musical papers to his memoirs — continues to generate fame even today. In 1990, in conjunction with the state's centennial, fans and members of Pioneer Heritage Inc. restored Welk's birth home.

The Welk children — operating as "The Welk Group" — now owns two resorts, one in Branson, Mo., and one in Escondido, Calif., featuring their father's musical memories.

Welk died May 17, 1992.

"He touched so many people," said Rosemary Schaefbauer, president of Pioneer Heritage Inc. "Everyone just loved him for his morals, his good, clean performances and his good character.

"A lot of people always said it was the shortest hour on the television because it always went fast," Schaefbauer said.

These days it doesn't go by quite as fast, with past episodes now remixed with current commentary.

Welk boasts one of the longest-running television programs, with his first broadcast in 1951, said syndication manager Heron. This year marks the 40th anniversary of Welk being televised nationwide; it now regularly appears on 272 different stations.

"It was a type of family entertainment," Heron said. "A lot of children grew up listening to Lawrence Welk. We're on our fourth and fifth generation of fans now.

"The young children respect him. Where do you find a show like that? Where do you find a person like that? He stayed a North Dakota farmboy to the end."

Linton, ND 58552-0038

EMMONS COUNTY RECORD

701.254.4537 • ecrbek@bektel.com • www.ecrecord.com • Founded June 10, 1884, by Darwin Reed Streeter • USPS-175-340
Williamsport, Dakota Territory

Testimony before the

Senate Appropriations Committee

Thursday, January 27, 2011

By Allan Burke
Publisher Emeritus
Emmons County Record
Linton, North Dakota

Chairman Holberg and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee:

My name is Allan Burke. I am Publisher Emeritus of the Emmons County Record, a weekly newspaper in Linton, and a long-time supporter of Pioneer Heritage, Inc. and the Lawrence Welk homestead at Strasburg. I want to thank District 28 Senator Robert Erbele for introducing Senate Bill 2291 to provide funding for the site, and thank you to the Committee for allowing me to testify this morning.

From the time the Welk site opened in 1991 through today, one of the major challenges has been funding the modest operation and finding the budget for signage, advertising, and other promotion. At the present time, the only signage is at the turn off to the site from U.S. Highway 83 just north of Strasburg. Several years ago, Newman Signs donated a billboard east of Bismarck along Interstate 94, and traffic at the site noticeably increased. However, Pioneer Heritage has never had the money necessary to lease highway billboards.

As you may know, The Lawrence Welk Show continues to air on the national Public Broadcasting System as it has since 1987. It is the most popular show on PBS with people 65 and older and previously was the most watched program on the network. Lawrence Welk's first television show was in 1951, and he was on the air with live weekly shows until he retired in 1982. Mr. Welk died in 1992.

Mr. Welk's prominence was recognized by his inclusion in the North Dakota Roughrider Hall of Fame, and all of you frequently walk by his portrait in the hallway outside this hearing room.

It should be noted that while the site celebrates the life of one of the entertainment industry's most successful television performers, it is also of major historical significance as a meticulously preserved pioneer homestead on the Dakota prairie, complete with an intact sod house, summer kitchen, and other out buildings overlooking a prairie lake.

The house is one of the few surviving sod houses and was professionally restored as a museum. The house and other buildings are authentically furnished, and a number of Lawrence Welk's items are on display.

Ludwig and Christina Welk, Lawrence Welk's parents, immigrated from Russia and settled in Dakota Territory near what is now Strasburg. Their story exemplifies this major ethnic group that was so much a part of the development of the Dakotas.

The sad fact is that the Welk site will close this year or in the near future if funding and professional assistance cannot be found. It has been run primarily with volunteers, including some of Lawrence Welk's nieces. With involvement of the State Historical Society of North Dakota and interim funding from the legislature, this site can continue to operate and become a more important educational tool to promote our state's heritage.

I would like to point out to the Committee that the Welk homestead would be an ideal tourism information point and interpretive center since it is the first historic site along U.S. Highway 83 on North Dakota's border with South Dakota. Its strategic location could be very beneficial to promoting North Dakota's attractions to people entering the state on the federal highway. In the immediate area are two other buildings on the National Register of Historic Places—St. Mary's Catholic Church in Hague and Sts. Peter & Paul Catholic Church in Strasburg.

It should be noted there is presently no tourism information site for those entering North Dakota from the south on U.S. Highway 83. In fact, there are no public historic sites open to the public along Highway 83 between Pierre, S.D., and Interstate 94 in North Dakota. The Welk homestead offers an opportunity that could benefit tourism throughout the state, and it would certainly be beneficial to the economy of south central North Dakota.

I would be happy to answer any questions members of the committee may have.

Thank you.

N.D. home still attracts visitors

Welk family home carries on memories

By Megan Boldt
Associated Press

STRASBURG, N.D. – It has been decades since anyone has lived on the small farmstead that made this small North Dakota farming community so famous.

But listen carefully. As visitors drive up from the gravel road, they can hear the champagne music flowing freely from the barn where Lawrence Welk used to play his accordion.

"His sisters would get so sick of him playing that thing that they would send him out to the barn," said Welk's niece, Edna Schwab.

Ten years after Welk's death at age 89, people still visit his family farm in Strasburg, tune into reruns of "The Lawrence Welk Show" on public television and join fan clubs celebrating the "wunnerful, wunnerful" orchestra leader.

Schwab is one of several community members who gives tours of the Welk farmstead two miles outside of Strasburg, a town of about 550 people south of Bismarck. Fans are greeted by a life-size cutout of the King of Champagne Music himself as they walk into the sod house in which his parents and seven siblings lived.

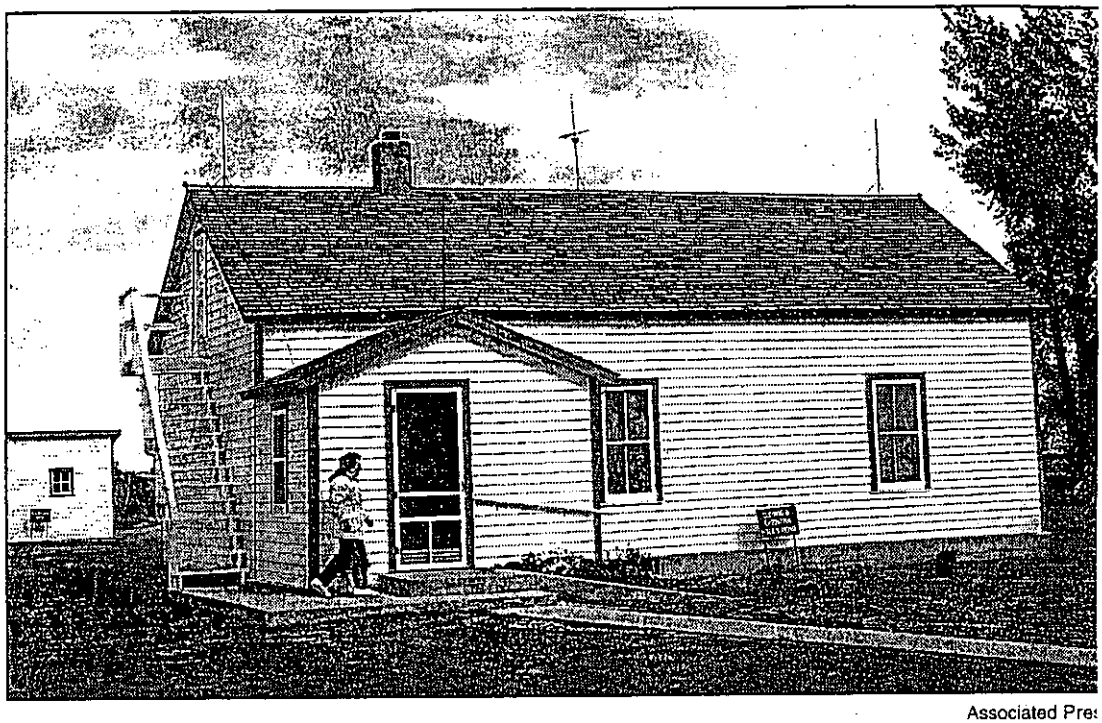
The homestead, which includes a summer kitchen, granary, buggy house, blacksmith shop, outhouse and barn, was restored and open for tours in 1991.

Wedding pictures dot the home, though it's missing one – the music maestro's wedding in Sioux City, Iowa.

"They didn't have a photographer," Schwab said.

A German bible and prayer book lie on one of the end tables in the Welk living room. The organ is a close match to the one the Welks owned.

About 6,400 visitors came in 1991 to take in such pieces of history. The number dropped to about 3,000 this year – probably because most people from the area have seen the homestead by now, Schwab said.



Associated Pres

Edna Schwab walks toward the front door of the Lawrence Welk farm house in Strasburg Schwab is a niece of Lawrence Welk.

It's tucked away, about 100 miles south of Bismarck and two miles off the "Lawrence Welk" Highway. The drive on the two-lane highway runs through farmland and an occasional small town.

In the fall, volunteers put on the storm windows, move some displays indoors for winter and take the Welk souvenirs into town in case passers-by are interested. But guides will open the homestead for tour groups during the off-season.

Schwab is never short of stories to tell to visitors who come from as far as California and Tennessee.

The Welks never had running water. And they were quite the musical family, she said.

"The older brother was probably the better musician," Schwab said. "He could play almost any instrument."

The visitors tell her some stories, too.

"They'll say, 'I danced with Lawrence Welk' or 'My grandma made me watch it on TV,' " Schwab said.

Welk left his family farm on his 21st birthday after playing at community weddings and barn dances. He didn't hit the big time until more than 20 years later, with a 1951 television appearance in Los Angeles. ABC picked up his show in 1955.

It ran for 16 years, and was syndicated until 1982.

Public television stations started running Welk's show again in 1987. About 5 million homes now tune in to the 267 stations that air it nationwide every week, said Margaret Heron, syndication manager for the Welk Group.

Heron, Welk's longtime secretary and friend, said generations of a family can watch the show together.

"I think its appeal is that it takes us back to a gentler lifestyle that we don't live today," she said.

Besides watching the reruns, people travel to places like the Welk resort in Branson, Mo., to see live shows featuring Welk's music.

Larry Welk, the son of the champagne music-maker, said the Christmas show is the most popular in Branson. Producers also bring the show on the road to fans across the country and Canada.

"It brings back a lot of no talgia and memories," Wel said. "And not just for olde generations. I don't think m father or any of us thought would go on as strong as this."

The show plans to come t North Dakota during its tou in March, to the Spirit Lak Casino near Devils Lak March 7-8.

WelkNotes, a Yahoo!-base fan club started in 2000, allow about 230 avid fans to log on t the Internet and chat abou Welk and stars from "Th Lawrence Welk Show."

"These are die-hard fans said Judy Shaw, who runs th listserv. "You'd be surprise how many fans are still devo ed to him. It's amazing."

She started a fan club i 1972, and then decided to sta the Internet chat group.

The group has few state rules. But the Web site warns one thing that is unacceptabl "Take note: Flaming, offensiv language, or anything of a unfriendly nature will not b acceptable on this list."

Welk would approve. H liked to keep things clean, eve firing original Champagn Lady Alice Lon in 1959 fo showing "too much knee" .o camera.

Linton Chamber of Commerce

P.O. Box 493
Linton, N.D. 58552-0493

January 27, 2011

Dear Chairman Holmberg:

The Linton Chamber of Commerce strongly supports Senate Bill 2291 as introduced by District 28 Senator Robert Erbele.

We believe state funding for the Welk homestead and involvement by the State Historical Society of North Dakota will not only benefit south central North Dakota but the entire state. The Welk site is ideally located to serve as a visitor and interpretive center. Its proximity to the South Dakota border and location on a federal highway are significant. Since the site has already been professionally developed, we believe it would be a good fit for the state's efforts to preserve our history and heritage.

With this letter is a copy of the *Emmons County Tourism Guide* which provides information on the various historic sites and recreational opportunities in our county.

We urge your thoughtful consideration and support of this legislation.

Sincerely,

Chad Williams
President
701-254-4625

3

SB 2291
Senate Appropriations Committee
January 27, 2011

Testimony by Merl Paaverud
Director-State Historical Society of North Dakota

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Merl Paaverud and I am director of the State Historical Society of North Dakota. I am here to present my testimony on Senate Bill 2291 that would appropriate funding through the Society that for a grant to cover operating costs at the Lawrence Welk Homestead over the next biennium.

First of all, I support this bill. This is an important site for the local area and for North Dakota's history because of its connection with Lawrence Welk, but also through its connections with North Dakota agriculture, German Russian immigrants, prairie homesteads, and their architecture. I think the next biennium will also give us time to complete a feasibility study for the site. This would involve working with the site's governing body and meeting with Welk Family, local supporters and local residents to gather their support for and opinions about the site and its future. Based on this information, a planning effort would follow to identify needs and a develop a time table for operating the site. This would result in a long range plan to guide operating, maintenance, interpretation and marketing needs and would also include a budget for each of these areas. This information would be useful for whomever is in charge of the site. This would also help to guide decisions about if the site's future operation.

The State Historical Society could become involved on a long term basis, but this would first be taken to the State Historical Board for their consideration. If they support it, the next step would be to work out the details for the transfer and include a funding proposal in the next Society's next budget request to acquire and operate the site on a permanent basis.

This concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer your questions.

2010-11 Linton Chamber of Commerce

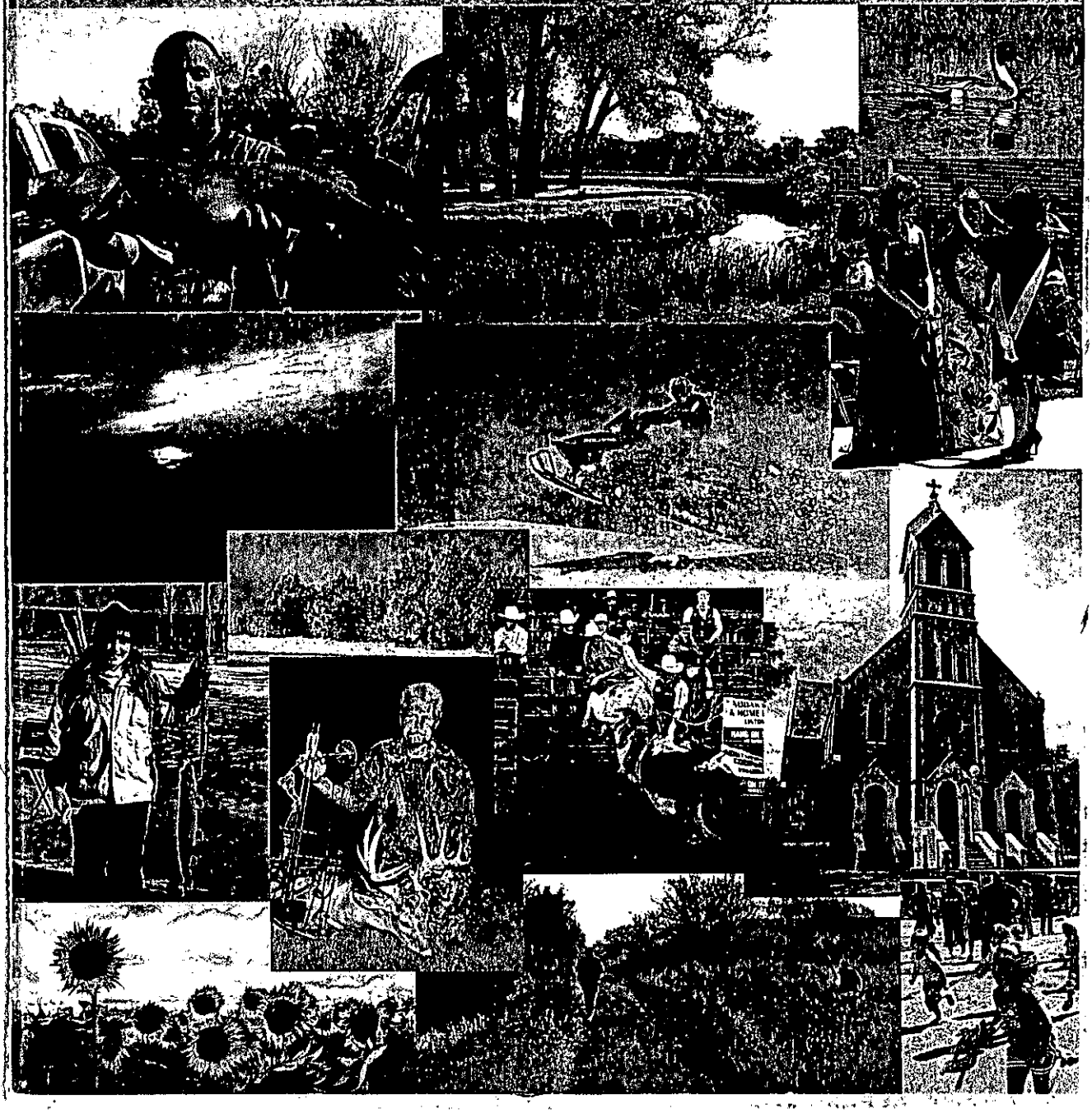
Emmons County Guide

Featuring Information on:

• Lake Oahe • Area Hunting and Fishing • Fun Events

• Historic Sites • Great Food • Comfortable Lodging

and Much More!



The Birthplace of Lawrence Welk

The Welk Homestead

Strasburg is very proud of its native son, Lawrence Welk. The Welk Homestead, on the National Register of Historic Places, is a beautiful remastering of his boyhood farm and is filled with history of not only Welk's heritage but the common German Russian heritage of many Emmons County residents.

The story of the Welk family goes back to Moritz Welk who married Magdalena Arth in 1802 in the village of Winzenbach, located in Lower Alsace, France. In 1808 Moritz and Magdalena, along with a hundred other German-Catholic families, immigrated to southern Russia. They founded the village of Selz in the Kutschurgan district near Odessa and the Black Sea.

Moritz and Magdalena's eldest son was Kasper, who married Magdalena Gutenberg in the 1820's. They had a son named Johannes. He married Marianna Schweitzer from the colony of Strasburg, Kutschurgan District, Black Sea Region.

The third child of Johannes and Marianna, Ludwig, and his wife, Christina, immigrated to America and homesteaded near what is now Strasburg. They were the parents of Lawrence Welk.

Lawrence was not interested in farming. He felt completely out of place and only enjoyed using the animals as an audience for his first efforts on his father's accordion.

At 17, this shy, slight boy who hated farm work made his conservative father an unbelievable offer: four years of labor on the farm and all the money he earned playing music in return for a $400 loan to buy the piano keyboard accordion he had dreamed of. He was 21 when he completed his end of the bargain.

The "Lawrence Welk Show" reruns can be seen on public television stations today.

Ground-breaking for the restoration of the homestead took place in June 1990. The dedication ceremonies were held June 1992 with about 3,500 people attending.

The Welk Homestead is open by appointment. For more information or to schedule a tour, contact Pioneer Heritage, Inc., PO Box 52, Strasburg, ND 58573, or call at (701) 336-7103, (701) 336-7169 or (701) 336-7353.

The dining room in the Welk home

Young Lawrence Welk used to play accordion for the farm animals in a barn

The Schwab Sod House

The Schwab Sod House is a beautifully preserved time capsule of early prairie life. One of the few sod houses left in the area, it has stood the test of time for over a century and stands now as a testament to the lasting influence of Emmons County pioneers.

Lorenz and Regina (Wald) Schwab built their house sometime in the early 1890s with German-Russian sun-dried adobe blocks. This time-tested building housed four generations of Schwabs, and today it stands as a reminder of Emmons County's heralding past.

Each room in the house features original furniture from different eras in the Schwabs' history, transporting visitors into times unfamiliar and sometimes even forgotten. The house lies amidst a quiet prairie, much like it did over a century ago.

To get to the Schwab Sod House, turn onto Main Street of Strasburg and go east. Follow this road as it goes 1/2 mile east of Strasburg, then turns north for one mile and then turns east again. After two miles comes 13th Avenue S.E. Take this road north for three miles, and the house will be to the east.

The house has been furnished with many different era items, like this 70's era living room

Emmons County's Royal Family invites you to Linton, N.D.!

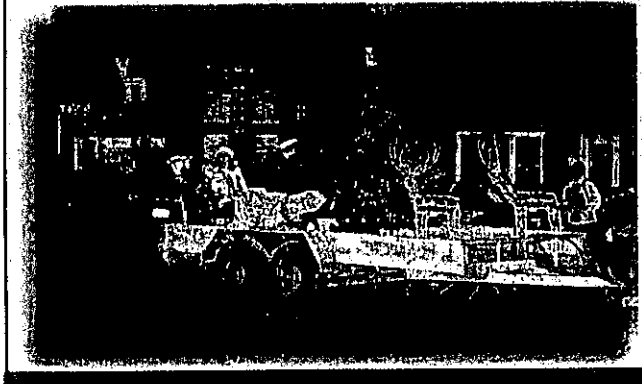
Dairy & Ag Day Royalty

Dairy Princess, Miss Farmer/Rancher, Little Miss Farmer/Rancher, Little Mr. Farmer/Rancher and their Royal Court

The Linton Chamber of Commerce invites you to see what our area has to offer and experience our small-town hospitality.

Our annual events include

· Cabin Fever Day · Easter Egg Hunt
· Dairy & Ag Day · Chili Cook Off
· City-wide Rummage Sale · Light Up the Night
· And much more!



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