

2026 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 55

*Commending the Smithfield Ruritan Club.*

Agreed to by the Senate, February 26, 2026

WHEREAS, the Smithfield Ruritan Club, one of the oldest chapters of Ruritan National in the United States, has enhanced local life in Smithfield and throughout Isle of Wight County by promoting fellowship and goodwill, and providing opportunities for service and outreach for 90 years; and

WHEREAS, the Smithfield Ruritan Club was established in 1935 when 29 local residents met at what is now the Smithfield Inn to petition for a charter sponsored by the Smithfield Rotary Club; and

WHEREAS, the charter members of the Smithfield Ruritan Club included numerous farmers and several prominent members of the community, such as Jesse J. Scott, publisher of *The Smithfield Times*, Carl M. Beale, who later donated the land for Beale Park, and P.D. Gwaltney III, whose grandfather established the meat-packing firm Gwaltney Incorporated; and

WHEREAS, Hugh Minga, a mail carrier from Carrollton, served as the first president of the Smithfield Ruritan Club and guided the organization to address the most pressing needs of the community; and

WHEREAS, the Smithfield Ruritan Club has served multiple generations of the same families in the community, and its longest-serving member, Herb Jones, joined the club in 1964; and

WHEREAS, the Smithfield Ruritan Club is unique among Ruritan chapters in that it has never had an official clubhouse; the chapter has often met in churches and other community spaces and currently gathers at Smithfield Station; and

WHEREAS, while the Smithfield Ruritan Club received a gift of five acres for a clubhouse in 1970, it ultimately chose to donate the land for the construction of the Riverside Lifelong Health and Rehabilitation nursing home; and

WHEREAS, the Smithfield Ruritan Club currently operates multiple fundraisers, including catfish dinners, a Fourth of July cookout, and a popular car show that has become a beloved local tradition over the past two decades; and

WHEREAS, proceeds from the Smithfield Ruritan Club's events support college scholarships, Christmas food baskets for families in need, and support for local first responders, churches, and other community organizations; and

WHEREAS, the Smithfield Ruritan Club also recognizes exceptional members of the community through its annual Farmer of the Year award and Citizen of the Year award, which is presented in conjunction with the Smithfield Rotary Club; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That the Smithfield Ruritan Club hereby be commended on the occasion of its 90th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Smithfield Ruritan Club as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's admiration for the club's legacy of generous contributions to the community.

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