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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 245

Offered March 4, 2026

Commending St. Johns Lodge No. 144 of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons.

Patron—Wright

WHEREAS, for 200 years, St. Johns Lodge No. 144 of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons has cultivated bonds of fellowship between residents of Charlotte County and created opportunities for leadership development, charitable outreach, and community engagement; and

WHEREAS, chartered by the Grand Lodge of Virginia on December 13, 1826, St. Johns Lodge No. 144 is one of the oldest fraternal organizations in Charlotte County and was established during a period of significant civic growth in Southside Virginia; and

WHEREAS, St. Johns Lodge No. 144 was founded by William B. Daniel, who served as its first worshipful master, along with John W. Daniel, Thomas H. Watkins, Richard H. Cardwell, James T. Henry, Benjamin F. Roberts, Samuel P. Daniel, William A. Booker, John Harvey, and Thomas J. Harvey; and

WHEREAS, St. Johns Lodge No. 144, which was located in Charlotte Court House, grew and thrived in its early years and remained active during the Civil War, becoming one of the most stable lodges in rural Virginia by the end of the 19th century thanks to the interwoven family networks that sustained membership and operations; and

WHEREAS, multiple generations of the same families supported St. Johns Lodge No. 144 in the 19th century, particularly the Daniel, Booker, Harvey, Hamlett, Roberts, Henry, and Spencer families; members came from all walks of life, including farmers, merchants, tradesmen, physicians, justices of the peace, and civic officials; and

WHEREAS, another Masonic lodge began serving the Keysville community in the mid-1800s with the foundation of Keysville Lodge No. 154, which drew its membership from merchants, railroad workers, farmers, and civic leaders in the rapidly growing area; and

WHEREAS, on March 10, 1906, a third Masonic lodge was established in Charlotte County, Charlotte Lodge No. 290 in Drakes Branch, where the rapid development of railroad infrastructure, tobacco warehouses, and new businesses made the town a natural location for a new lodge; over the course of its history, the lodge was destroyed and rebuilt twice due to catastrophic fires; and

WHEREAS, over the course of the 20th century, St. Johns Lodge No. 144, Charlotte Lodge No. 290, and Keysville Lodge No. 154 remained steadfast institutions in the Charlotte County community, weathering the effects of the Great Depression, World War I and World War II, and other global events, while adapting to shifting demographics in rural Virginia; and

WHEREAS, in 2004, as population decline and aging membership began to affect all three lodges, the Grand Lodge of Virginia approved the consolidation of St. Johns Lodge No. 144, Charlotte Lodge No. 290, and Keysville Lodge No. 154 to better serve the local Masonic community; and

WHEREAS, Charlotte Lodge No. 290 was chosen as the physical location of the unified lodge, but St. Johns Lodge No. 144 was ultimately chosen as the identity for the lodge, given its heritage as the oldest lodge of the three; and

WHEREAS, the consolidated St. Johns Lodge No. 144 has carefully and meticulously preserved the lineage of officers and members, records, and artifacts from all three lodges; and

WHEREAS, throughout its history, St. Johns Lodge No. 144 has upheld the mission of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons to foster charity and community service; the organization currently participates in the Adopt-a-Highway program, maintaining a section of roadway near Eureka Elementary School; and

WHEREAS, St. Johns Lodge No. 144 also awards scholarships to help local high school students achieve their goals in higher education, raises funds to support a variety of charitable causes, and participates in community events throughout Charlotte County; the organization observes the feast days of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist, considered the patron saints of Freemasonry; and

WHEREAS, as of 2026, St. Johns Lodge No. 144 has 51 members and remains active, committed, and firmly rooted in its mission of service and fellowship, standing as a pillar of stability and tradition in the community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That St. Johns Lodge No. 144 of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons hereby be commended on the occasion of its 200th anniversary; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Glenwood Dean Foster, worshipful master of St. Johns Lodge No. 144 of the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, as an expression of the organization's longstanding legacy of service to the Charlotte County community.

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