

News Advisory from Congressman

Chet Edwards

17th District, Texas • 2369 Rayburn Building, Washington, D.C. 20515-4311 (202) 225-6105

115 south Main Street Suite 202 Cleburne, Texas 76033 (817) 645-4743

600 Austin Avenue, Suite 29, Waco, Texas 76706-1093 (254) 752-9600

111 University Drive East Suite 216 College Station, TX 77840 (979) 691-8797

Homepage: www.house.gov/edwards



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Contact: Chris Chwastyk

(202) 225-6105 or (202) 550-4086

Department of Interior Recommends Waco Mammoth Site For National Park Service Inclusion Edwards Introduces Bill to Authorize Congressional Approval and Funding

(Washington, D.C.) –U.S. Representative Chet Edwards released the following statement today.

“I am pleased to announce that the U.S. Department of Interior has given its final recommendation for the Waco Mammoth Site to become a part of the National Park System as an official National Monument.

This is great news for Waco and a dream come true for community leaders who have worked hard for over a decade to showcase our world-class mammoth site.

As part of the National Park System, the Waco Mammoth Site will become a major tourist attraction that will bring visitors, students and researchers here from throughout Texas and the nation.

The Waco Mammoth site will be in incredible educational tool for Central Texas schools and students.

Not only did the Department of Interior support making the Waco Mammoth Site an official part of the National Park Service, it recommended the option that would have the National Park Service leading the partnership with the City of Waco and Baylor University.

Under this proposal, the National Park Service would take the lead responsibility for ensuring the protection, scientific study and visitor enjoyment of paleontological resources.

This was the proposal strongly preferred by the city of Waco. Other options could have been to have no National Park Service involvement or to have had the partnership led by the local partners.

I have introduced today in the House the “Waco Mammoth National Monument Establishment Act of 2009.” This legislation, when passed into law, will implement the Department of Interior proposal and authorize appropriations for the project.

Along with Waco community leaders, I have been working on this project for over 9 years and appropriated \$400,000 in funding in 2005 to help preserve this site and its treasured contents. I intend to make it one of my highest priorities in Congress this year to pass the authorizing legislation. Once authorized I will do everything I can to ensure the appropriations needed to preserve this world-class, historic site.

The Waco Mammoth Site is unique in the world, and I salute the vision and incredible dedication of our community leaders who are bringing this dream to reality. The leadership of Mayor Virginia Dupuy, City Manager Larry Groth, Baylor University and Ellie Caston has been instrumental in this effort. And, we all owe a debt of gratitude for the unmatched dedication and generosity of Gloria and FM Young, Jane and Paul Meyer, Don Moes, Tommye Lou Davis, Karla Leeper and Gayle Lacy. Their support, along with the vision of Sam Jack and Liz McGlasson have made it possible for the Waco Mammoth Site to fulfill its true promise as a national treasure.”

Waco Mammoth Site Background

In 2002, Edwards authored legislation that directed the National Park Service to determine the feasibility of establishing a national park at the Waco Mammoth Site. Edwards’ legislation became law on December 16, 2002. In 2005, Edwards secured \$200,000 for preservation efforts at the Waco Mammoth Site and \$200,000 for the Baylor Mayborn Museum’s Mammoth Exhibit. In 2006 and 2007, Edwards generated a letter from the Texas congressional delegation to Interior Department recommending the Waco Mammoth site for inclusion in National Park System. In 2008, the NPS completed the study and recommended to the Department of Interior that the site be included in the National Park System. Edwards and local officials attended a ground breaking ceremony for the construction of a permanent protective cover and viewing pavilion.

The Waco Mammoth Site is unique in the world as the largest known collection of prehistoric mammoths perishing in the same event.

For the Mammoth Site to become a national monument the Edwards’ bill must be passed by Congress, be signed into law by the president and then funds must be appropriated for the site by Congress.

Edwards represents District 17 in Texas, the Chairman of the House Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee and a member of the Budget Committee.