



2009 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 52

October 21, 2009 – Introduced by Senators VINEHOUT, KEDZIE, GROTHMAN, COWLES, OLSEN, TAYLOR and SULLIVAN, cosponsored by Representatives DANOU, NEWCOMER, STRACHOTA, TURNER, BIES and TOWNSEND. Referred to Committee on Senate Organization.

1 **Relating to:** the life and public service of Ernest Paul Sobotta.

2 Whereas, Ernest P. Sobotta, lifelong resident of Independence, Wisconsin, died
3 October 8, 2009, at the age of 93; and

4 Whereas, Ernest was born January 9, 1916, and served the city of
5 Independence, Trempealeau County, the state of Wisconsin, and his country for his
6 entire life; and

7 Whereas, Ernest served in the National Guard and with the U.S. Army in the
8 African and European theaters of WWII and was a proud member and commander
9 of American Legion Post 186; and

10 Whereas, Ernest was a pioneer in the telephone industry: he began his career
11 as a lineman for the REA during the Great Depression, became the general manager
12 of the Independence Telephone Company, and was one of the founders, and served
13 as general manager, of the Tri-County Telephone Cooperative for Trempealeau,
14 Buffalo, and Jackson counties, which was the first telephone company in the nation
15 to offer exclusively private line service; and

1 Whereas, Ernest served as president and board officer of the Wisconsin State
2 Telecommunications Association and was voted to its hall of fame for a lifetime of
3 service and leadership, and he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the
4 National Telephone Cooperative Association for his pioneering work in the industry;
5 and

6 Whereas, Ernest was a founder and officer of Western Wisconsin
7 Communications Cooperative, the first organization in the nation to offer cable
8 communications in a rural area; and

9 Whereas, he worked with the Kellogg Foundation, local rural electrification
10 and telecommunications leaders, the University of Wisconsin System, local schools
11 and businesses, and members of Congress and the Wisconsin legislature as a
12 cofounder of Project Circuit/the Western Wisconsin School Consortium, a
13 first-in-the-nation landmark education project linking five rural school systems
14 through two-way telecommunications which allowed rural students a broader range
15 of educational opportunities; and

16 Whereas, he served over ten years as a member of the Trempealeau County
17 Board of Supervisors and served as the Trempealeau County civil defense officer, an
18 alderman in the city of Independence, and the president of the Library Board; and

19 Whereas, Ernest served as a member of numerous community organizations,
20 including the Lion's Club, the Elk Rod and Gun Club, and was a founder of the
21 Independence High School Wrestling Booster Club; and

22 Whereas, Ernest was a longtime member of the Independence Volunteer Fire
23 Department, a board member of the Grandview Nursing Home in Blair, and a board
24 member of the Trempealeau County Parks and Recreation Department, and for
25 many years he wound the clock in the Independence City Hall clock tower; and

