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Convention & Visitors Bureau

Written Testimony before the House Committee on Federal and State Affairs HB 2689

Submitted by Susan Henderson; Director, Lawrence Convention & Visitors Bureau
Friday, March 2, 2012

The Lawrence Convention & Visitors Bureau appreciates the opportunity to submit written testimony in favor of House Bill 2689, which seeks to allow a railcar operator to obtain a liquor license.

An out-of-state business owner has determined that Baldwin City, Kansas can be a viable headquarters for his long-standing railcar restaurant. The Dinner Train offers passengers a multi-course, fine dining experience while they travel the rails in one of four rail cars that have been restored to 1940s elegance.

In recent years, this business has drawn more than 6,000 riders/diners annually with a reported 97% coming from outside of the train's home county. There appears to be strong potential for this attraction to draw visitors to Kansas and to contribute positively to the economy of Douglas County.

In order for this business to relocate to our state, and continue to operate an upscale restaurant, the owner believes it is imperative that he be able to obtain a liquor license and operate a full-service bar. This restaurant delivers guests an entertainment experience that is not currently available in our area and has potential to draw visitors for not only the railcar opportunity, but to shop and stay in Douglas County.

The Lawrence Convention & Visitors Bureau believes that this business would be a positive addition to the visitor offerings in our area and I urge you to support the ability for this railcar operator to obtain a liquor license.

House Federal & State Affairs

Date: 3-05-12

Attachment # 19