

Colonia streets could be lit if residents foot bill

More colonias could soon see the light, but they'll have to pay up under a bill that passed the House and awaits consideration in the Senate.

House Bill 573 gives commissioners courts of

counties within 150 miles of Mexico authority to make plans to install, operate and maintain streetlights along county roads in a subdivision.

The county can also set up a way for residents

to pay for the lighting, including a contract with a private utility company.

It is the second bill by Rep. Veronica Gonzales, D-McAllen, filed in as many regular legislative sessions and designed to improve lighting in colonias. In 2005 she sponsored a bill that allowed counties to use federal grants to buy the light posts. The current law would allow them to turn on the lights.

Gonzales said her office figured it would cost about \$7 per month to run each light. Each household would pay about \$3 per month for the lights, she said.

Lighted roads prevent traffic accidents, pedestrian injuries and theft, and they save residents money on car repairs,

she said.

"We want to see the lives of these citizens be improved," she said.

KINO AND SON TAKE SPOTLIGHT ON HOUSE FLOOR

On Friday, Ismael "Kino" Flores Jr. was the center of attention on the House floor, where he visited often as a child.

The House passed a resolution in honor of the son of Rep. Ismael "Kino" Flores, D-Mission. Junior is graduating from the University of Texas School of Law and has landed a job with the lobbying and law firm of Vinson & Elkins.

Kino Jr. blew a kiss to his dad and pointed in gratitude from the gallery above the House floor as he accepted applause.

The resolution said he was a top student who enjoys baseball, hunting, fishing, and breeding and racing horses.

UT School of Law is a popular postgraduate spot for namesake sons of Rio Grande Valley lawmakers. State Sen. Eddie Lucio Jr., D-Brownsville, saw his son, now Rep. Eddie Lucio III, graduate from the school last year. Rep. Rene Oliveira's son, Rene Oliveira Jr., is a student at the school as well.

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