

JUNETEENTH DAY

WHEREAS, Juneteenth, or Juneteenth Independence Day, commemorates the traditional observance of the end of slavery in the United States and is observed annually on June 19; and

WHEREAS, President Abraham Lincoln declared that "in giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free - honorable alike in what we give, and what we preserve. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of earth;" and

WHEREAS, on January 1, 1863, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring that "all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free;" and

WHEREAS, President Lincoln correctly believed slavery to be in violation of the principles of the Declaration of Independence and that its abolition represented a "new birth of freedom" for the United States; and

WHEREAS, more than two years would pass before the news reached African Americans living in Texas, when on June 19, 1865, Union Major General Gordon Granger and his regiment arrived in Galveston and spread the word that slavery had been abolished; and

WHEREAS, the following year, the first official Juneteenth celebrations took place in Texas and have continued across the United States throughout the years; and

WHEREAS, emancipation in Florida was proclaimed in Tallahassee on May 20, 1865, and for this reason Floridians traditionally celebrate Emancipation Day on May 20; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth is an important opportunity to honor the principles of the Declaration of Independence and celebrate the achievements and contributions African Americans have made, and continue to make, in Florida and across our Nation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Eugene Fultz, Mayor of the City of Lake Wales, do hereby proclaim June 19, 2021, as

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In the City of Lake Wales and encourage all citizens to commemorate this occasion.

Eugene L. Fultz, Mayor