

**JUNETEENTH** *from page 1A*

So, as we establish Juneteenth as our newest national holiday, let us be clear about what happened on June 19, 1865.”

On that day, two months after the American Civil War had ended, Union Army General Gordon Granger announced in Galveston, Texas, that more than 250,000 enslaved people in Texas were free.

He presented state officials with General Order No. 3 which stated:

“The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of personal rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection heretofore existing between them becomes that between employer and hired labor. The freedmen are advised to remain quietly at their present homes and work for wages. They are informed that they will not be allowed to collect at military posts and that they will not be supported in idleness either there or elsewhere.”

This day came to be known as “Juneteenth,” by the newly freed people in Texas.

U.S. President Abraham Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation more than two years earlier, but Texas was never directly defeated by Union soldiers and never officially freed those enslaved until forced by the arrival of Federal troops under Granger’s command.

Lincoln was assassinated on April 15, 1865, two months before his proclamation made it to Texas. According to History.com, “The year following 1865, freedmen in Texas organized the first of what became the annual celebration of ‘Jubilee Day; on June 19. In the ensuing decades, Juneteenth commemorations featured music, barbecues, prayer services and other activities, and, as Black people migrated from Texas to other parts of the country, the Juneteenth tradition spread.”

The push to permanently recognize the Texas announcement and formalize national recognition of the changes in American society

in the post-Civil War era began decades ago. This was mainly a response by civic leaders taking note of regional celebrations as the event became more popular and widespread. This trend continued in subsequent years and

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— *U.S. General Gordon Granger, General Orders No. 3*

was finalized with the signing of the act this week.

The effort for formal recognition gathered momentum after the murder of George Floyd in 2020 and the civil rights protests which erupted nationwide. The urgency of the effort was accelerated after videos of the murder became public and mass protests against police brutality swept across the country.

The situation was further inflamed when former President Donald Trump scheduled his first COVID-era rally in Tulsa last year, on June 19.

The pushback from the African American community was swift and highly critical of the plan. The announcement was met with promises of protests at the Tulsa location if the rally took place. In the face of mounting national outrage, the rally was rescheduled.

In 2020, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown made an announcement related to the new law and shared her support for further action.

“This year, celebrating Black freedom and achievement on Juneteenth is more important than ever as people across Oregon, the United States, and around the world protest systemic racism and unequivocally show that Black Lives Matter,” Brown stated. “I encourage all Oregonians to join me in observing Juneteenth by getting educated on systemic racism in this country and getting involved in the fight for racial justice.”

In May 2021, the Oregon legislature voted to recognize June-

teenth as a state holiday, starting in 2022. Now, however, Biden’s signature on Bill S.475 authorizes immediate implementation of the law, which celebrates a national commemoration of the day marking the end of slavery in Texas and the full emancipation of all former slaves.

Biden spoke of the importance of this particular recognition of history and the lessons learned from the Civil War, but was also very complimentary of the efforts of members of both parties to pass the legislation.

“Great nations don’t ignore their most painful moments ... they embrace them. Great nations don’t walk away, they come to terms with the mistakes they’ve made. In remembering those moments, we begin to heal and grow stronger,” the president said. “I am especially pleased that we showed the nation that we can come together as Democrats and Republicans to commemorate the day with overwhelming support of Congress.”

The passage of the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act will take effect immediately and many State of Oregon and federal employees had Friday, June 18, off with pay.

**FLORENCE  
HONORS  
JUNETEENTH**

Florence ORganizes p.m. (FOR) will sponsor a Juneteenth Celebration on Saturday, June 19, outside at the Florence United Methodist Church from 11 a.m. to 1

Florence City Council- or Sally Wantz will deliver a statement and read from Oregon Gov. Kate Brown’s bill recognizing Juneteenth,

which she signed on June 5.

There will also be a special guest speaker, Holli Johnson, the newly elected first African American Director on the LCC School

Board Director.

Other speakers include Siuslaw School Board Director Maureen Miltenberger, LCC Florence Dean Russ Pierson and Rev. Dr. Karen Love Baisinger from the

Florence United Methodist Church.

This is a family-friendly event and there will be fun activities for children.

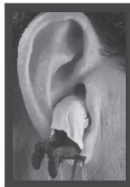
Musical entertainment will be provided by local musician and songwriter Sunny Sundstrom. Bring a chair and a picnic and enjoy the joyous event. For more information, visit [forflorence.org](http://forflorence.org).

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