



City of South Fulton Government

NEWS RELEASE

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South Fulton Adopts Juneteenth as an Official Holiday

(CITY OF SOUTH FULTON, GA – June 23, 2020) – Juneteenth is now a holiday in the City of South Fulton as the city today became among the first to officially recognize the day and its historical significance.

City council members voted to establish June 19 as a city holiday to celebrate the end of slavery in the United States. Specifically, the day commemorates the June 19, 1865 announcement in Galveston, Texas of federal orders that all slaves in the state were free.

“Juneteenth represents one of the most significant moments not only in African American history, but also in American history,” said Mayor William “Bill” Edwards. “With the current climate of change in our nation, it is only fitting that we officially celebrate not just the end of slavery, but also more than 150 years of freedom and progress.”

While only brief discussions have been held, preliminary plans for events in the City of South Fulton next June include a concert and an arts and food festival that could stretch over two days.

The city’s decision comes as support for an official federal holiday builds across the country. Members of the U.S. Senate are considering a measure that would place it on the federal calendar.

The original decree in Galveston came two months after the end of the Civil War and two and a half years after Abraham Lincoln declared an end to slavery on Jan. 1, 1963 through the Emancipation Proclamation.

Juneteenth observances started in 1866 with church-community events. Celebrations built momentum and commercial support in the 1920s and 30s, often focusing on food and arts festivals. This century, most major cities have held Juneteenth celebrations.

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