

Proclamation



WHEREAS, Juneteenth, also known as Emancipation Day, Freedom Day, and Juneteenth Independence Day, marks the day on June 19, 1865, when enslaved African Americans in Galveston, Texas, were finally informed of their freedom—more than two years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. This historic event symbolizes the true end of slavery in the United States and has become the most recognized African-American holiday observance in the country.

WHEREAS, Over eleven million African Americans survived the transatlantic journey to the New World, with millions more lost to inhumane conditions. Juneteenth honors their strength, resilience, and the pursuit of freedom that continues today. The phrase “Until All Are Free, None Are Free” reminds us that the fight for equality must continue until justice is achieved for all.

WHEREAS, In 1991, Florida Representative Alzo J. Reddick Sr. led efforts to officially recognize Juneteenth in Florida, with Governor Lawton Chiles signing it into law that year. In 1992, Florida’s first official Juneteenth observance was organized by the Juneteenth Committee, founded by Doris Moore Bailey.

WHEREAS, Haines City has embraced the significance of Juneteenth. In 2019, resident **Betty White** led the city’s celebrations, helping bring greater recognition to the importance of the day. In 2021, **Mayor Morris L. West** became the **first mayor in Polk County** to establish Juneteenth as a **paid city holiday**, further solidifying the city’s commitment to honoring African American heritage and history.

WHEREAS, the 19th of June, along with the 4th of July, completes the cycle of freedom for America’s Independence Day observances; and

WHEREAS, on July 2, 2022 the City Commission approved Resolution No. 20-1479 naming June 19th as “Juneteenth Independence Day” in the City of Haines City and later renamed the day of celebration from “Juneteenth Independence Day” to “Juneteenth Freedom Day”.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Morris L. West, the Mayor of the City of Haines City, do hereby proclaim June 19th 2025 as:

“Juneteenth Freedom Day”

in the City of Haines City and urge all public officials, educators, librarians, and all residents of Haines City to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Haines City, to be affixed this 3rd day of July, 2025.

Morris L. West, Mayor