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Juneteenth and General Order Number 3

By Galveston Historical Foundation

Editor's note: This article was originally posted on www.galvestonhistory.org .

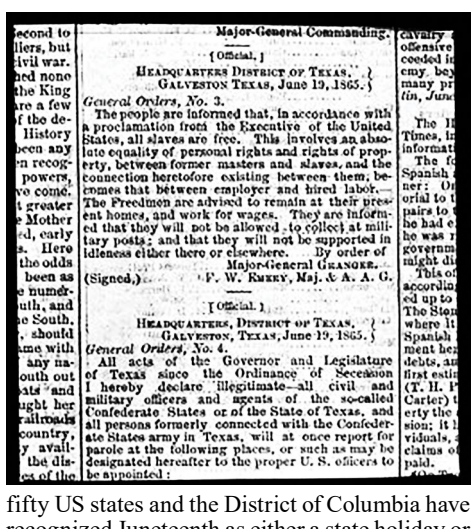
Juneteenth and General Order Number 3, read on June 19, 1865, announcing that all slaves were free, is one of Galveston's most important historical moments.

US President Abraham Lincoln announced the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862. Issued under powers granted to the president "as a fit and necessary war measure," the proclamation declared, "That on the 1st day of January, AD 1863, 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 . . ."

However, Lincoln's proclamation would have little impact on Texans at that time due to the small number of Union troops available to enforce it.

Two and a half years later, in June of 1865, more than two thousand federal soldiers of the 13th Army Corps arrived in Galveston and with them Major General Gordon Granger, Commanding Officer, District of Texas. Granger's men marched through Galveston reading General Order Number 3 at numerous locations, including their headquarters at the Osterman Building, 1861 Custom House, courthouse, and then the Negro Church on Broadway, as Reedy Chapel-AME Church was referred to then. The order informed all Texans that, in accordance with a proclamation from the executive of the United States, all slaves were free.

It was from that moment that Juneteenth would be born. Since then, the annual commemoration has grown from local roots to a national celebration featuring parades, readings, processions, and more. In the late 1970s, the Texas legislature declared Juneteenth a "holiday of significance [. . .] particularly to the blacks of Texas." Texas was the first state to establish Juneteenth as a state holiday under legislation introduced by freshman Democratic state representative Al Edwards (Houston). The law passed through the Texas legislature in 1979 and was officially made a state holiday on January 1, 1980. After Texas recognized the date, many states followed suit. Currently, forty-seven of the



Major-General Commanding.

{ Official. }

HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT OF TEXAS,
GALVESTON TEXAS, June 19, 1865.

General Orders, No. 3.

The people 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 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.

By order of
Major-General GRANGER.
(Signed,) F. W. EMERY, Maj. & A. A. G.

{ Official. }

HEADQUARTERS, DISTRICT OF TEXAS,
GALVESTON, TEXAS, June 19, 1865.

General Orders, No. 4.

All acts of the Governor and Legislature of Texas since the Ordinance of Secession I hereby declare illegitimate—all civil and military officers and agents of the so-called Confederate States or of the State of Texas, and all persons formerly connected with the Confederate States army in Texas, will at once report for parole at the following places, or such as may be designated hereafter to the proper U. S. officers to be appointed :

fifty US states and the District of Columbia have recognized Juneteenth as either a state holiday or ceremonial holiday, a day of observance.

In 1979, the Galveston Juneteenth Committee under the leadership of former city manager Doug

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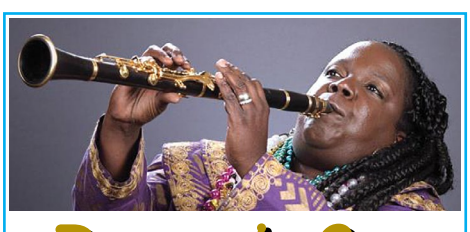

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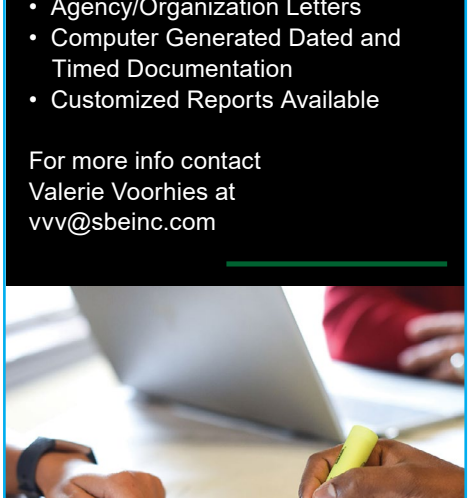

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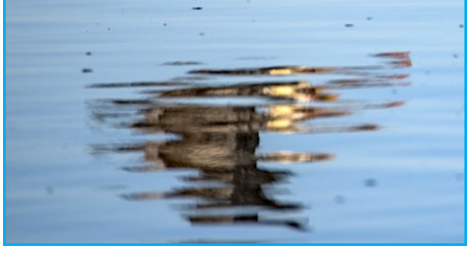

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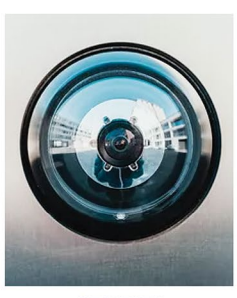

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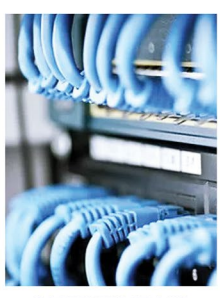

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2026

SBA 101: Introduction to SBA Programs Webinar
Monday, June 29, 2026, 9:00 am–10:00 am CDT
Online
Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration, Rhode Island District Office
Contact: Brian Hopkins, 401-528-4575, brian.hopkins@sba.gov
Fee: Free; registration required
This free workshop, presented by the Rhode Island District Office, is designed to help entrepreneurs understand the various SBA programs and services available to help them as they start, expand, grow, and recover their businesses. This overview presentation covers: Introduction to the SBA; SBA Resource Partner Network—Business Training and One-on-One Counseling; Selling to the Federal Government—SBA Contracting Certification Programs; Access to Capital—Loan and Surety Bond Programs; International Trade Assistance; Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Assistance Loans. Register online for the free workshop webinar at https://www.sba.gov/event/85134

Federal Contracting for Small Businesses Webinar
Tuesday, July 14, 2026, 11:00 am–12:30 pm CDT
Online
Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration
Contact: Irene Gonzalez, 208-334-1673, irene.gonzalez@sba.gov
Fee: Free; registration required
Learn the essentials of federal contracting for small businesses. This event will cover the basics of navigating the federal contracting process, as well as the various certifications available to help your small business succeed in the government marketplace. Certifications include: 8(a) Business Development Program, HUBZone Certification, Woman Owned Small Business (WOSB/EDWOSB), and Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB). Don't miss this opportunity to gain valuable insights and resources to help your small business. Register at https://www.eventbrite.com/e/federal-contracting-basics-and-certifications-for-small-businesses-tickets-1977729664666

Federal Contracting: Woman-Owned Small Business (WOSB) Certification Program Webinar
Tuesday, July 21, 2026, 1:00 pm–3:00 pm CDT
Online
Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration
Contact: Patrice Dozier, patrice.dozier@sba.gov
Fee: Free; registration required
SBA is creating a space for Woman-Owned Small Businesses, via WOSB certification! Are you a woman owner of a small business? The federal government's goal is to award at least five percent of all federal contracting dollars to woman-owned small businesses each year. Join us for training on how to register for SBA's Woman-Owned Small Business (WOSB) program, which helps eligible small businesses to qualify for federal contracting opportunities. The monthly sessions include an overview of the self-certification process, and a discussion of the NAICS codes that qualify as WOSB or EDWOSB. Register at https://www.eventbrite.com/e/woman-owned-small-business-wosb-certification-program-tickets-1986914400458

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