

Abe Lee Barham Shows Pride in Juneteenth and Long-Time Civil Rights Work

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - In the time of June and July celebrations, one of the most important each year to Alton community activist Abe Lee Barham is Juneteenth.

For many years, Barham has been active in civil rights issues in the Alton area and it is a definite passion for him.

Once again Alton marked Juneteenth at James Killion Park and again it was filled with people, activities and plenty of good food and drinks. Julianna Straten the Juneteenth, Lt. Governor, appeared in Alton and Barham said that was “a great honor.”

“We got started around 11 a.m. on Saturday, June 27, at James Killion Park,” he said.

“This year we expanded things and added bull riding, along with several vendors and food crafts. It is a great event each year with a lot of meaning.”

“It was June 1865 before all of America was free because many hadn’t received official word President Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation,” Barham said. Barham projected the Juneteenth celebration grew from about 400 last year to around 700 this year, so the day continues to resonate with businesses and residents of Alton and the area.

Barham said he was proud of the Juneteenth event and the participation and looks forward to it in future years. He said it is a very important event for the African American culture to mark its actual independence in America.