

Alton's Juneteenth Tradition Continues With Freedom Celebration On June 17

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - Alton has become very known for its Annual Juneteenth Freedom Celebration over the years. On June 17, the 32nd Annual Juneteenth will be held at James H. Killion Park (formerly Salu Park) from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Set up begins at 7:30 a.m. and opening ceremony begins at 11:30 a.m.

Abe Lee Barham, one of the organizers of the event, said: "The Juneteenth Celebration is a community effort to celebrate the memory of 1865 freedom for African Americans

in the history of the United States. Our ancestors were slaves/property in 1776 when independence was declared for the United States - July 4).

Barham said all pastors, praise dancers, choirs, soloists, praise teams, poets, food vendors, storytellers, creative artists, musicians craft/merchandise vendors and those who portray famous black Americans should sign up for the event.

"This is a most commemorative event and if you plan to participate contact Marquato Rattler (618) 910-7422, Anne Johnson at (618) 466-9369 or Lee Barham at (618) 799-9157.

Barham pointed out that Juneteenth is the oldest known celebration commemorating the end of slavery in the United States.

"On June 19, 1865, the Union soldiers, led by General Gordon Granger, arrived in the city of Galveston, Texas, with the news that the war had ended and all slaves were now free," Barham said. "This was two and a half years after President Abraham Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation."