

DESOTO COUNTY, FLORIDA PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the State of Florida seceded from the United States of America on January 10, 1861, and a month later, joined with South Carolina and Mississippi to form the Confederate States of America; and

WHEREAS, on September 22, 1862, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln issued “The Emancipation Proclamation” that proclaimed “That on the first day of January, in the year of one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free;” and

WHEREAS, when General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House in Virginia on April 9, 1865, the Confederate States of America was defeated; however, each state’s Confederate government had to surrender before the proclamation could take effect; and

WHEREAS, on May 10th, U.S. Brigadier General Edward M. McCook accepted from C.S.A. forces the possession of Tallahassee, Florida’s state capital; and

WHEREAS, after General McCook announced on May 20th that the Emancipation Proclamation was in effect, and on that same day received by train delivery from Jacksonville, Special Order Number 63 from Major General Quincy A. Gillmore announcing that “the people of the black race are free citizens of the United States;” and

WHEREAS, May 20th has been recognized and celebrated annually as Emancipation Day or Freedom Day in cities and communities throughout Florida, including Arcadia and DeSoto County, and that the HCW Foundation supports the observance of this historic milestone and the importance of freedom for all.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED that the Board of County Commissioners of DeSoto County, recognize May 20th, 2026 as:

“Emancipation Day”

PASSED AND DULY ADOPTED this 12th day of May, 2026

ATTEST:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
DESOTO COUNTY, FLORIDA

Mandy Hines

Steve Hickox