



RICK SCOTT
GOVERNOR

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH IN FLORIDA

WHEREAS, Native Americans have contributed to the history and well-being of the United States and Florida; and

WHEREAS, the 2010 United States Census documented over 160,000 Native American or Alaska Native peoples in Florida; and

WHEREAS, many Native American tribes remain on tribal lands or reservations where they retain traditional culture and values; and

WHEREAS, Florida is home today to two federally recognized tribes, the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, along with many urban tribal citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Seminole Tribe of Florida traces its roots back at least 12,000 years; and

WHEREAS, the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida resides in the historic Florida Everglades and maintains their unique way of life and works to transmit the essence of their heritage to their descendants; and

WHEREAS, Native American Heritage Month honors all Native Americans who served in the United States military; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Rick Scott, Governor of the State of Florida, do hereby extend greetings and best wishes to all observing November 2017 as *Native American Heritage Month in Florida*.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Florida to be affixed at Tallahassee, the Capital, this 8th day of November, in the year two thousand seventeen.



Governor

Join us in Celebrating Native American Heritage Month

By Curtis Osceola, Florida Governor's Council on Indian Affairs, Inc.

As the Executive Director of the Florida Governor's Council on Indian Affairs, Inc., a private non-profit corporation, I want to encourage the citizens of Florida and all Native Americans in observing the entire month of November as Native American Heritage Month. During a time when we show our gratitude to our Native American friends and neighbors, it is important to recognize the valuable and colorful contributions the Native community has made to our country. Florida Governor, the Honorable Rick Scott, affirmed through his proclamation the special place Native Americans hold in the history of our state.

In 1990, former President George H.W. Bush, approved a joint resolution designating November as Native American Heritage Month. The resolution signified great progress on the road to equality for Native Americans. Dedicating a month to educating others about Native American culture, as well as the history behind the proclamation, is crucial to understanding Native American heritage. The recognition of Native American Heritage Month proves that our call for acknowledgement and appreciation has not gone unanswered.

Native American commemorations have recently gained national respect and attention. Some states have replaced Columbus Day with Native American Day or Indigenous Peoples' Day, while others designate one day per year as American Indian Day. Many communities participate in Native American arts and cultural festivals, offering people a chance to try native foods and listen to traditional music. Art exhibitions featuring Native American artists can be found in many cities and many museums showcasing traditional clothing and historical artifacts.

By celebrating Native American Heritage Month, we continue to find respectful means for honoring our past and claiming our future. We, as the indigenous peoples of this nation, continue to express and share our culture with those who want to understand and learn more. We hope that through the celebration of this month, people may find a new appreciation for Native American culture and history.

While there are still challenges to overcome, steps are being made in the right direction towards improving Native American equality. Many organizations, such as the Florida Governor's Council on Indian Affairs, Inc., work to advocate for all Native Americans within Florida. Our mission is to achieve economic self-sufficiency and self-determination through self-governance, resource protections, and preservation of culture and heritage in Indian Country.

I urge you to celebrate with us this November, the Native American Heritage Month, in your community, by recognizing the significant contributions the first Americans made to the establishment and growth of our great nation.

Please join us,

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