



**CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING – COUNCIL MEMBER ITEMS REPORT**

**TO:** CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** GRACEY VAN DER MARK, MAYOR  
PAT BURNS, MAYOR PRO TEM  
CASEY MCKEON, COUNCIL MEMBER

**DATE:** DECEMBER 19, 2023

**SUBJECT: CONSIDER ESTABLISHING A MONTHLY PROGRAM TO HONOR THE HISTORIC HERITAGE OF THE UNITED STATES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AND CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH**

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**ISSUE STATEMENT**

We recommend developing a twelve-month program designed to honor the rich historic heritage of the United States, California, and Huntington Beach. Each month will be dedicated to a specific theme, highlighting significant events, landmarks, and influential figures that have shaped the history of our Nation, State, and City. Through a series of engaging themes/activities that utilize our libraries and media resources, residents and visitors alike will have the opportunity to explore, appreciate, and preserve the legacy of the history that led Huntington Beach to be a great American city. (This series would be intended to be free of any identity politics and political agendas.)

Program name ideas:

- "From Pioneers to Paradise: Honoring Huntington Beach's Legacy"
- "Tides of Time: Celebrating Huntington Beach's Historical Tapestry"
- "Legends and Landmarks: Unveiling the History of Huntington Beach, California and the United States"
- "Huntington Beach Heritage Journey: A Year of Historic Celebrations"

2024 monthly themes:

January – "Founders' Legacy - Celebrating Huntington Beach's Origins" - This month will focus on the City's founding, the establishment of Huntington Beach, and the early pioneers who shaped its history, including Talbert, Helme, Slater, etc.

February – "The Revolutionary and Civil War" - How America won its freedom from the British Monarchy and how the Civil War led to the freedom of slaves in the United States. This will lead up to the Civil War re-enactment in Central Park in March.

March – "California's History" - Before statehood to now and what it means to be a Charter City in California.

April – "Rails and Waves - Tracing the History of Huntington Beach's Railroad" - This month explores the historical significance of the Pacific Electric Railway and its impact on the growth and development



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of Huntington Beach. This would include the introduction of Henry Huntington, who brought the trains in and was a member of the Bolsa Chica Gun Club when he first heard of Pacific City, which became Huntington Beach. (Huntington bought Pacific City in April 1903.)

May – “The Bill of Rights” – Learning and highlighting the first 10 Amendments to the Constitution that spell out American’s rights in relation to their government (i.e., guaranteed civil rights and liberties to the individual, freedom of speech, press and religion). This would also include rules for due process of law, which reserves all powers not delegated to the Federal Government to the people or the States.

June – “History of Independence Day and What It Means Today” – How America won its independence and became one of the greatest nations in the history of the world. This month would focus on the drafting of the Declaration of Independence, the Founding Fathers, and all of the events that led up to its signing as a lead up to Independence Day, culminating with the Huntington Beach Independence Day Parade. (Tie in to the Independence Day Parade and the Red Car rail history.)

July – "Surf City Showcase: Celebrating Surfing Heritage" - This month would focus on Huntington Beach's reputation as Surf City and celebrate its vibrant surfing culture, including leading up to the annual U.S. Open of Surfing. July will also feature “Parks Make Life Better Month”, a statewide celebration that enables the Community & Library Services Department to showcase and promote the value and benefits of parks and recreation throughout the community.

August – “We Love Our Libraries - Huntington Beach’s commitment to books, reading and learning” - This month would detail the history of local libraries starting more than 120 years ago, through the Carnegie Library, Main St. Library, and Central Library, which soon turns 50 years old, with an emphasis on reading and writing activities for the community.

September – "Celebrating Aviation" - This month would focus on the City's aviation history, including the presence of Boeing and Meadowlark Airport and the history of aviation in the USA, from land to space with a lead up to the culmination of the Pacific Airshow in Huntington Beach.

October – “History of Our Military Services” – This month would focus on the Branch birthdays and roles: National Guard: December 13, 1636; Army: June 14, 1775; Navy: October 13, 1775; Marine Corps: November 10, 1775; Coast Guard: August 4, 1790; Air Force: September 18, 1947; Space Force: December 20, 2019.

November - "Black Gold Jubilee: Honoring the Discovery of Oil" - This month would pay tribute to the significant discovery of oil in May 1920 that transformed Huntington Beach and had a profound impact on its development and where it is now.

December – "Preserving Parks & Nature - Appreciating Huntington Beach's Ecological Legacy" - This month would pick up from July’s “Parks Make Life Better Month” and further dive into the history of the wetlands and City parks including Central Park, Lake Park, the Urban Forest, and the Secret Garden.



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Additional themes – The City should continue to engage in scheduled monthly celebrations that promote public safety and health. Examples include Pedestrian Safety, Distracted Driving Awareness, Breast Cancer Awareness, and Autism Awareness. The City will also continue plans for the 2024 Jubilee Celebrations that will feature special stories and events celebrating the City’s heritage each month.

### Other calendar ideas for consideration:

January - “The Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln”. This freed the slaves in the States rebelling against the Union. What that meant to America and its future.

July – “Our Pledge of Allegiance and Our National Anthem”. A history of each, along with an overview of the California Constitution.

August - “August 2, 1776” - In Philadelphia, most of the 55 members of the Continental Congress signed the parchment copy of the Declaration of Independence.

September - “The Constitution of the United States of America”.

September - “California Becomes a State and a Part of the USA” - Of course, one of California’s most defining moments in history was when it officially became a state. California was named the 31st state in the union on September 9, 1850.

October - "Art in the Park: Showcasing Huntington Beach's Creative Legacy" - This month could highlight Arts Month and the City's artistic heritage, featuring local artists, public art installations, and the role of the Huntington Beach Art Center.

November - "Waves of Valor: Honoring Huntington Beach's Military Heritage" - This month could pay tribute to the City's military history, including the role of Huntington Beach during World War II. (Veteran’s Day)

“Opening of the Transcontinental Railroad” - The building and opening of the Transcontinental Railroad meant it was possible to transport commodities such as coal from California to other states. Eventually, the invention of refrigerator cars led to California being the number one agricultural producer, according to the California State Railroad Foundation. California became an incredibly important state, with much needed goods being delivered to the rest of the country.

"Golden Bear Revival: Commemorating the Iconic Nightclub" - This month could highlight the rich musical history of Huntington Beach and commemorate the opening and influence of the legendary Golden Bear nightclub along with other notable local musical venues from Safari Sam’s to Night Moves.

"Pier Pioneers: Celebrating the Huntington Beach Pier" - This month could showcase the iconic Huntington Beach Pier, its construction, historical moments, and its enduring significance as a symbol of the City. (First concrete pier dedicated June 1914)



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“Wintersburg: Remembering the Vibrant Japanese-American Community” - This month could focus on the Japanese-American community that played such a rich part in the City’s cultural development while also having to deal with the community’s unfair displacement during World War II.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Request the City Manager to direct staff to implement the 2024 monthly themes listed above. In addition, form a Brown Act committee of 7-9 residents appointed by two Council liaisons to continue developing twelve-month programs (starting with 2025) designed to celebrate and honor the rich historic heritage of the United States, California, and Huntington Beach. Each month will be dedicated to a specific theme, highlighting significant events, landmarks, and influential figures that have shaped the history of our Nation, State, and City. Through a series of engaging activities utilizing our libraries and media resources, residents and visitors alike will have the opportunity to explore, appreciate, and preserve the legacy of the history that led Huntington Beach to be a great American city. (This series would be intended to be free of any identity politics and political agendas.)

The Committee would meet on a limited basis (1-3 times per year) to develop the twelve-month calendar with their Council Liaisons and Staff Liaison to ensure that the City has the ability to present the content. The Committee will then present the calendar to City Council for approval before the start of the year; amendments may also be presented as needed. The Committee should be able to enlist the assistance of the Historic Resource Board and City staff within reason via Council liaison requests. All monthly themes hosted by the City must be included in this approved twelve-month program and will therefore repeal and supersede all such monthly themes/celebrations previously approved by Council. This effort excludes proclamations requested by outside groups and presented by the Mayor per Administrative Regulation 512.

### **Environmental Status:**

This action is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Sections 15060(c)(2) (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment) and 15060(c)(3) (the activity is not a project as defined in Section 15378) of the CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change to the environment, directly or indirectly.

### **Strategic Plan Goal:**

Goal 7 - Public Engagement, Strategy C - Expand and enhance community outreach engagement opportunities through neighborhood town halls, direct mailers, and videos.

For details, visit [www.huntingtonbeachca.gov/strategicplan](http://www.huntingtonbeachca.gov/strategicplan).