



City of Spruce Grove Proclamation Emancipation Day

August 1, 2023

WHEREAS; in 2021, the federal government designated August 1 as Emancipation Day to honour the official end of slavery in Canada when the Slavery Abolition Act became law across the British empire on August 1, 1834, providing thousands of African people and their descendants with newfound freedom; and

WHEREAS; while often overlooked, Canada has a significant historical connection to the institution of slavery, as enslaved Africans were brought to this land and subjected to cruel and dehumanizing conditions; and

WHEREAS; slavery existed in Canada for more than two centuries, exploiting African and Indigenous individuals for unpaid labour, erasing their identities and violating their basic human rights; and

WHEREAS; the suffering endured by African men, women and children during their forced transportation to North America on countless slave trading voyages with an estimated loss of two million lives, cannot be ignored; and

WHEREAS; enslaved people in Canada faced considerable racism, discrimination, abuse and injustice that should not be forgotten; and

WHEREAS; more than 30,000 enslaved African Americans seeking liberation settled as free persons in Canada, including some ancestors of Spruce Grove residents; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of Emancipation Day on August 1 is an opportunity to acknowledge the impact of the slave trade on the lives, families and culture of people of African descent; and

WHEREAS, the City of Spruce Grove is committed to working to eliminate systemic racism, discrimination and prejudice that still exists today;

THEREFORE, I, Jan Gillett, Deputy Mayor of the City of Spruce Grove, do hereby proclaim the 1st day of August 2023 as Emancipation Day in the City of Spruce Grove. I encourage citizens to reflect on the history of emancipation and celebrate the contributions and resilience of Black Canadians.