

ASIAN AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH

WHEREAS, Buncombe County is committed to reflecting the concerns and needs of the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities; and

WHEREAS, Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month seeks to honor and recognize the contributions of Pacific Islanders, East Asians, South Asians, Southeast Asians, and West Asians; and

WHEREAS, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have played a significant role in America's history, with their enormous contributions to science, arts, industry, government, and commerce; and

WHEREAS, traders from the Asia-Pacific region reached North America as early as the 16th century, but the first significant wave of immigration began during the late 1800s; and

WHEREAS, Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month originated in a congressional bill in June of 1977, and on March 28, 1979, President Carter issued Presidential Proclamation 4650, proclaiming the week beginning on May 4, 1979, as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week; and

WHEREAS, the month of May was selected as it honors the immigration of the first Japanese residents to the United States in 1843; and

WHEREAS, while May also marks the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869, constructed by the labor of mostly Chinese immigrants, we recognize Chinese laborers were paid lower wages than their white peers and some faced physical abuse from their supervisors; and

WHEREAS, while the population of people who identify as Asian or Pacific Islander in Buncombe County is just shy of two percent, the artistic, culinary, and educational contributions are immeasurable; and

WHEREAS, through our values of respect, integrity, collaboration, honesty, and equity, we honor AAPI individuals and stand in solidarity with the AAPI community as we work to dismantle systemic racism; and

WHEREAS, a vast diversity of languages, religions, and cultural traditions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders strengthens the fabric of American society and our Buncombe County community.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners proclaims May 2024 to be **ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH** and urges our community to join together in celebrating our residents of Asian and Pacific Island heritage and in making this period of rededication to the principles of justice and equality for all people.

Brownie Newman, Chairman
Buncombe County Board of Commissioners