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EXECUTIVE ORDER

Creating the Colorado Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Office of the Governor of the State of Colorado, I, Bill Ritter, Jr., Governor of the State of Colorado, hereby issue this Executive Order creating the Colorado Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission.

I. Background and Need

On February 12, 2009, the nation will celebrate the bicentennial anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth. In recognition and anticipation of this anniversary, the United States Congress created an Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission ("ALBC") to encourage participation in the celebration of Abraham Lincoln's 200th birthday. The goals of the Commission are to increase knowledge and awareness of Lincoln in the United States and abroad; encourage public participation and attendance at bicentennial activities and institutions; increase historical literacy about Lincoln for young people; encourage research, scholarship, and increased understanding of Lincoln's legacy by leveraging bicentennial themes of freedom, democracy and equal opportunity, serving as a catalyst for conversation and engagement of diverse perspectives; and creating a lasting legacy of Lincoln themes and contributions to endure beyond the bicentennial.

Abraham Lincoln's legacy has special importance to Colorado and the West. The defense of the West was an issue that made Abraham Lincoln the leader he became. As a candidate for office in the 1850's, Lincoln drew the line against the expansion of slavery to the West. In 1861, as President, he held that line. Lincoln's presidential policies shaped the development of the West and Colorado for years to come. The Homestead Act gave free land to thousands of settlers. The government-sponsored Union-Pacific Railroad created a way for people to come west and produce to go east. Abraham Lincoln also labored to keep Colorado out of the Civil War—to "keep the plains at peace." Lincoln wanted no war in the far west, and Colorado Unionists fought successfully to keep Confederates from establishing a western war front. Abraham Lincoln's legacy was to open the West to emancipated African Americans who came to Colorado.

The purpose of the Colorado Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission (the "Colorado Commission") is to lead Colorado's efforts to understand and appreciate the significance of Abraham Lincoln and his presidency to our nation's and State's history, and to

encourage dialogue about the “unfinished work” of democracy and equal opportunity in our own place and time. The Commission will: recommend and initiate programs to commemorate the bicentennial anniversary of Abraham Lincoln’s birth throughout 2009; promote awareness of how the West shaped Lincoln and how he shaped the West; and encourage dialogue about and civic engagement with the challenges to democracy and equal opportunity that Lincoln faced in his time and that we face in ours.

II. Membership

- A. The Colorado Commission shall consist of up to twenty (20) members, appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the Governor. The Commission shall include but not be limited to the following:
1. A member of the Colorado House of Representatives, appointed in consultation with the Speaker of the House and the Minority Leader of the Colorado House of Representatives;
 2. A member of the Colorado Senate, appointed in consultation with the President and Minority Leader of the Colorado Senate;
 3. A representative of the Colorado Department of Education;
 4. A representative of the State Library;
 5. A representatives of Colorado Historical Society;
 6. A representative of the Denver Public Library (Western and African American History Collection);
 7. A representative of the Colorado Humanities;
 8. Historians with expertise in America history, Colorado history, African American history, and Native American history
 9. Leaders in the business community;
 10. Leaders of charitable foundations; and
 11. Individuals with expertise in marketing, public relations, and broadcast media.
- B. Efforts will be made to ensure geographic, cultural, and demographic representation on the Colorado Commission.

- C. The Governor shall designate a member of the Colorado Commission to serve as its chair.
- D. The Governor shall designate a member of the Colorado Commission to serve as a representative to the federal ALBC.

III. Mission and Scope

The Colorado Commission will have the following responsibilities:

- A. Lead Colorado's planning efforts to commemorate Lincoln's importance to the West and to our national history;
- B. Make recommendations outlining the most effective ways to mark Colorado's observance of the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth;
- C. Act as a clearinghouse for information and resources related to Lincoln Bicentennial activities and issue the Commission's endorsement and make available the logo for use in connection with Colorado Lincoln Bicentennial activities;
- D. Assure the quality of programs, presentations, and forums endorsed by the Colorado Commission;
- E. Assure the quality of scholars and conveners who become part of the civic dialogue about Lincoln and the "unfinished work";
- F. Assure there is broad access across the State to Lincoln-related events, Commission recommended speakers, and Lincoln-focused teaching and research; and
- G. Encourage media attention to Colorado Commission-endorsed programs, to Lincoln-related exhibits, and to civic forums seeking solutions to our own "unfinished work" in Colorado.

IV. Directive

The Colorado Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission is hereby created.

V. Duration

This Executive Order shall remain in force until December 31, 2009, at which time the Colorado Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission shall be dissolved.

GIVEN under my hand and the
Executive Seal of the State of
Colorado this ninth day of
September, 2008.

Bill Ritter, Jr.
Governor