

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, it was the hottest and driest June in history. Lightning caused wildfires to begin in Volusia County. On July 1, 1998; 15,000 residents were ordered to evacuate in Ormond Beach. I-95 closed from Jacksonville to the Beeline in Brevard. Fires came dangerously close to Hunter's Ridge and Plantation Pines; and

WHEREAS, July 2, 40,000 more residents fled their homes in Volusia, Flagler and Brevard Counties. July 3, all Flagler residents are ordered to evacuate. Beginning July 4, firefighters were better able to attack the fires due to an easterly sea breeze and scattered showers, I-95 reopened and heavy rains over the next few days turned fire blazes into smoldering remnants. Fires had burned a half million acres in Florida. The hardest hit area in Volusia was Ormond Beach. During the height of the fire, I-95, SR 40, US1 and A1A were closed. 137,000 acres burned in Volusia; and

WHEREAS, many superheroes emerged from Ormond Beach. Fire Chief Barry Baker requested the use of Houligans as a base station and rest area for a few hours; but it turned into several days of 24 hour service to the hundreds of firefighters from around the Country. Houligans served over 22,000 meals and provided other necessities. Bodez by Tasso offered showers and a place to rest. Supplies were requested, which resulted in a large response from local businesses and the community; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Rick Cobb and members of Riverbend Community Church offered their church as the headquarters for the Fire and Police Departments, Red Cross, and the media. Firefighters were grateful to utilize the church to sleep in shifts. Church members and local restaurants supplied thousands of prepared meals daily. The three major TV stations broadcast live from the church 24 hours a day during the event; and

WHEREAS, Gary Ruffle and Jim Cooksey of the Ormond Beach Rotary were some of the first volunteers at Houligans, working around the clock to meet the needs of hundreds of firefighters. Their membership raised money for a brush truck that was donated to the City by selling t-shirts with the slogan, "I survived the fires of 1998." They also generously helped families that had been affected by the fires; and

WHEREAS, our leaders during the fires were Fire Chief Baker and Police Chief Larry Mathieson. Chief Baker coordinated firefighters coming from 42 states and Chief Mathieson coordinated the evacuations. Chief Mathieson fondly remembers the announcement to hundreds of residents from Hunter's Ridge and Breakaway Trails, that the firefighters had saved their homes, the entire auditorium broke out in cheers, tears and enormous appreciation of the many individuals who helped to save their homes; and

WHEREAS, current firefighters that were employed during the fires are Chief Bob Mandarin, Driver Engineer Randy Bennett, Captain Ed Flud, Captain Bill Giles, Captain Tom LaChausse, Captain Robert Ray, Driver Engineer Matt Shubert, Driver Engineer Tim Snook; and

WHEREAS, current police officers that were employed during the fires are Community Service Officer Cristian Stephens, Captain Lisa Rosenthal, Lieutenant Jim Doggett, Lieutenant DW Smith, Officer Greg Stokes, Officer Keith Walker, Officer Michael Bakaysa, Sergeant Keith Bandell, and Records Clerk Juanita Garza; and

WHEREAS, current general employees that were employed during the fires are Kevin Gray, Joe Scott, Denise Roeper, Stefan Sibley, Liviston Edwards, Gary Boyle, Gerry Pitchford, Bill Rose, George Postell, Loretta Moasio, Ken White, and Beth Kaye; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bill Partington, Mayor of the City of Ormond Beach, Florida, do hereby proclaim June 26, 2018, as a day to honor

ORMOND'S SUPERHEROES

in the City of Ormond Beach and urge all residents to join with me on this day as we recognize these courageous men and women who placed their own lives in danger to preserve those of others. These are ordinary humans performing extraordinary deeds for the good of the community. This is the true meaning of "hero".

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I hereunto set my hand and cause the seal of the City of Ormond Beach, Florida, to be affixed this 26th day of June in the year of our Lord, Two Thousand Eighteen.



BILL PARTINGTON
Mayor