

**June 13, 2018**

## **Newspaper boxes renovated to accept retired American flags**

MOBILE, Alabama — In observance of National Flag Day, two decommissioned newspaper boxes from the Press-Register have been renovated into receptacles for U.S. flags that need to be retired. Ceremonies dedicating the boxes will take place Thursday, June 14.

The community project was led by the Fatherhood Initiative. This is a community-based program sponsored by the Mobile County Health Department (MCHD) that is designed to remove the barriers to being an effective parent through evidence-based practices and partnerships with various organizations. The facilitators educate participants throughout Mobile County at the Metro Jail, Desi Career Center, Waterfront Rescue Mission, and other community and faith-based organizations.

The Fatherhood Initiative has been nationally and regionally recognized for the efforts in connecting programs within the judicial and law enforcement community. It works closely with the Mobile Police Department (MPD). Curtis Graves, Director of Strategic Initiatives with MPD, also serves part-time as Program Administrator for the Fatherhood Initiative.

In tribute to this partnership, the first retirement box ceremony will take place at the MPD Headquarters at 2460 Government Street. Police Chief Lawrence Battiste is scheduled to attend the 9 a.m. event. Also set to speak is retired Navy Cmdr. Pete Riehm of the Military Officers Association.

The second box will be located in the lobby of MCHD's Keeler Memorial Building at 251 North Bayou Street. The ceremony will take place later that morning.

Once the boxes are full, the Boy Scout of America headquarters in Mobile will be contacted. A troop will be assigned to collect the flags and then conduct a proper flag retirement ceremony.

The Fourth of July was traditionally celebrated as America's birthday, but the website [www.USflag.org](http://www.USflag.org) states the idea of an annual day specifically celebrating the U.S. flag is believed to have first originated in 1885. B.J. Cigrand, a schoolteacher, arranged for the pupils in Fredonia, Wisconsin, to observe June 14 (the 108th anniversary of the official adoption of The Stars and Stripes) as a "Flag Birthday."

In numerous magazines and newspaper articles and public addresses over the following years, Cigrand continued to enthusiastically advocate the observance of June 14 as "Flag Birthday" or "Flag Day." Inspired by these celebrations, Flag Day — the anniversary of the Flag Resolution of 1777 — was officially established by the Proclamation of President Woodrow Wilson on May 30, 1916.

While Flag Day was celebrated in various communities for years after Wilson's proclamation, it was not until August 3, 1949, that President Harry Truman signed an Act of Congress designating June 14 of each year as National Flag Day.