



## REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

ITEM NO. 20

**DATE OF MEETING:** August 2, 2010

**REQUESTED BY:** Ms. Monique Baker, Pender County Tourism Development Authority

**SHORT TITLE:** Resolution Recognizing and Supporting the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor

**BACKGROUND:** The Gullah/Geechee people are descendants of enslaved Africans who lived and labored in relative isolation in the coastal rice-growing regions of mainland North America during the antebellum period. Because of their isolation, the Gullah/Geechee people were able to develop and maintain the distinct Gullah language, traditions, foodways, material culture, music, and artistic expressions. The Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor embraces an area of approximately 12,000 square miles along the Atlantic coast extending from southeastern North Carolina to northern Florida. The northern limit of the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor is Pender County. The first planters and their labor was crucial to the development of some of the largest rice plantations in the Cape Fear region. The Gullah/Geechee people have made significant contributions to the history and culture of Pender County.

The Corridor was adopted by Congress in 2006. A 25-member Commission was appointed, and the Commission is working with the National Park Service to develop a management plan. Dr. John Haley, a retired UNCW History Professor, is on the Commission. The Vice-Chairman is Eulis Willis from Narvassa.

The County's planning staff will be working to include significant historic-architectural resources related to the corridor in our inventory of historic and cultural resources so they can be protected and preserved. Mike Taylor and Monique Baker will help in promoting the cultural heritage corridor as a unique tourism asset as well as a historical asset.

**SPECIFIC ACTION REQUESTED:** To consider adoption of the attached resolution entitled "Resolution Recognizing and Supporting the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor and the Significant Contributions the Gullah/Geechee People Have Made to the History and Culture of Pender County".



**RESOLUTION**  
**RECOGNIZING AND SUPPORTING THE GULLAH/GEECHEE CULTURAL HERITAGE**  
**CORRIDOR AND THE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS THE GULLAH/GEECHEE PEOPLE**  
**HAVE MADE TO THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF PENDER COUNTY**

**WHEREAS**, the Gullah/Geechee people are descendants of enslaved Africans who lived and labored in relative isolation in the coastal rice-growing regions of mainland North America during the antebellum period, and

**WHEREAS**, because of their isolation, the Gullah/Geechee people were able to develop and maintain the distinct Gullah language, traditions, foodways, material culture, music, and artistic expressions, and

**WHEREAS**, in 2006, the United States Congress passed legislation that was signed by President George W. Bush creating the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor to recognize the important contributions made to American culture and history by Gullah/Geechee people, and

**WHEREAS**, the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor embraces an area of approximately 12,000 square miles along the Atlantic coast extending from southeastern North Carolina to northern Florida, and

**WHEREAS**, the northern limit of the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor is Pender County, and

**WHEREAS**, during the first half of the eighteenth century the ancestors of the Gullah/Geechee people arrived in what is now Pender County along with the first planters and their labor was crucial to the development of some of the largest rice plantations in the Cape Fear region, and,

**WHEREAS**, the Gullah/Geechee people have continued to live in Pender County up to the present day,

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Pender County Board of Commissioners applauds the establishment of the Gullah/Geechee Heritage Corridor and its Commission; affirmatively recognizes the significant contributions that the Gullah/Geechee people have made to the history and culture of Pender County and to our state and nation; and supports the efforts to document and preserve historical and cultural assets of the Gullah/Geechee people in Pender County.

Adopted this the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of August, 2010.

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Jimmy T. Tate, Chairman

ATTEST:

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Rick Benton, County Manager