

POLICY TITLE OFFICIAL ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE CITY OF SANTA CRUZ

POLICY STATEMENT:

The Mission Fiesta, held in the fall, is considered to be the official anniversary of the founding of the City of Santa Cruz.

Observance of the Founding of Santa Cruz

The first weekend in October is officially designated for observance of the founding of Santa Cruz. This date represents a composite of several historical dates and past community practices.

- The first local use of the Santa Cruz name was on October 18, 1769, as reported by Father Crespi, when the Portola expedition gave the name Arroyo de Santa Cruz to the creek later known as Majors Creek. The Santa Cruz name was subsequently applied to the surrounding area as well.
- The Santa Cruz Mission was founded by Father Lasuen on August 28, 1791 as the nucleus of a settlement including Spanish religious and civil personnel and native peoples. The Mission was dedicated on September 25, 1791.
- Santa Cruz County (briefly, Branciforte County) was one of the original 27 counties in the State of California, created on February 18, 1850. The town of Santa Cruz was chartered by the State of California in 1866, and was later incorporated as a City in March of 1876.
- In the 1920s a tradition was established of celebrating the City's history in late September or early October. Initially, there are two separate observances -- the City's Birthday and the Mission Fiesta. These were soon combined into one celebration encompassing both the Mission era and the later settlement. Organizers chose this time of year to maximize participation of the local community, avoiding the main tourist season but still taking advantage of favorable weather. This tradition continued until World War II.
- In 1980 the City's birthday celebration was revived with establishment of the Mission Fiesta, produced cooperatively by the Adobe Coalition, City of Santa Cruz, and California State Parks. This event, held annually for 10 years on the first weekend in October was designated to promote restoration of the Mission Adobe and highlight the area's diverse cultural heritage.

AUTHORIZATION: Council Policy Manual Update of November 17, 1998

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