St.George
THE BRIGHTER SIDE

Join Mayor Pike, City Council in celebration of St. George's 157th birthday, Jan. 12 at Social Hall Parlor

ST. GEORGE — General Ulysses S. Grant had just assumed command of the Union Army, photography was in its infancy and the city we now know as St. George was a barren, desert wasteland situated in an area that would not gain statehood for another 34 years.

It was 1862, the year St. George was established.

Fast forward 157 years. On Jan. 12, 2019, Mayor Jon Pike and members of the City Council will commemorate the city's birthday by preparing free root beer floats and cookies at the Social Hall Parlor (47 East 200 North) from noon to 2 p.m.

In addition to the refreshments downtown, several other freebies will be available Jan. 12, including free admission to the Sand Hollow Aquatic Center, St. George Recreation Center, St. George Art Museum and free rides all day on SunTran buses. Musical entertainment at the Social Hall will be provided by "Dulce," a husband-and-wife duo who will play familiar favorites from a variety of genres.

"This is a great opportunity to have a party with the whole community," Pike said. "And if those two hours that we have the root beer floats don't work for you, there are many other free activities you can participate in during the day. We invite everyone to experience what we call The Brighter Side."

What promises to be a day filled with fun and fellowship stands in stark contrast to the country's state of affairs January 17, 1862, the day St. George was incorporated.

The United States was a nation divided, nine months into what would be a four-year Civil War. The West was rugged and wild. The transcontinental railroad was still seven years from completion, which meant travel had to be done on horseback or foot — through sometimes hostile territory.

The first settlers entered the Salt Lake Valley in mid-1847 and less than 15 years later, about 300 miles to the south, St. George was founded. In the ensuing 150-plus years, the area has flourished. St. George is now home to approximately 90,000 residents and is the fastest-growing metropolitan area in the USA.

"We truly admire the sacrifice and struggle of the early settlers of St. George," Pike added. "The fortitude and faith that they were doing the right thing is an inspiration to me, as well as many others."

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