

1 A MEMORIAL

2 RECOGNIZING THE CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BLACKDOM  
3 HOMESTEADER COLONY IN CHAVES COUNTY AND REQUESTING THE  
4 CULTURAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO STUDY  
5 HOW TO GAIN ACCESS TO THE HISTORICAL TOWNSITE.

6  
7 WHEREAS, Blackdom was the most influential Black  
8 homesteader colony in New Mexico; and

9 WHEREAS, Blackdom, located about twenty miles south of  
10 Roswell in Chaves county, was founded by Black settlers in  
11 1901; and

12 WHEREAS, Francis Marion Boyer, known as Frank Boyer, was  
13 raised hearing stories about New Mexico from his father,  
14 Henry Boyer, a freedman from Georgia, who served as a wagoner  
15 with the army units of Stephen W. Kearny during the  
16 Mexican-American War; and

17 WHEREAS, Frank was educated at Morehouse college and  
18 Fisk university, where he learned about the legal  
19 requirements of homesteading; and

20 WHEREAS, Frank encouraged African Americans to report  
21 and challenge abuses in the Jim Crow era, leading to his life  
22 being threatened by the ku klux klan; and

23 WHEREAS, encouraged to move west for his safety, Frank  
24 traveled to New Mexico on foot with two students, picking up  
25 day labor along the way; and

1           WHEREAS, Frank's wife, Ella, and their four children  
2 followed in 1901; and

3           WHEREAS, Blackdom was founded by Frank and Ella Boyer  
4 under the requirements of the federal Homestead Act and was  
5 incorporated in 1903 by thirteen African Americans; and

6           WHEREAS, the town experienced significant growth in its  
7 first decades, with settlers from throughout the United  
8 States moving to the community; and

9           WHEREAS, many residents lived on farms, but Blackdom  
10 also developed a small village with its own United States  
11 post office, a store, a pumping plant and an office building;  
12 and

13           WHEREAS, several other businesses flourished, including  
14 a blacksmith shop, a hotel, a weekly newspaper and a Baptist  
15 church; and

16           WHEREAS, the residents of Blackdom established a  
17 community school to ensure that Blackdom's children would be  
18 educated; and

19           WHEREAS, Lloyd Allen was a respected teacher who  
20 emphasized the importance of education to his Blackdom  
21 students; and

22           WHEREAS, prominent families of Blackdom included the  
23 Boyers, Herrons, Proffits, Collinses, Eubankses, Wilsons and  
24 Smiths, with many families intertwined through kinship and  
25 marriage relationships; and

1           WHEREAS, the exact population of the community is  
2 unknown, but the national park service estimates that  
3 approximately one hundred fifty people resided in the  
4 community, of which twelve women homesteaded, several on  
5 their own; and

6           WHEREAS, Blackdom's prosperity depended on adequate  
7 precipitation, but a drought and the depletion of natural  
8 wells of the Roswell artesian basin aquifer starting in 1916  
9 caused many of the settlers to relocate; and

10          WHEREAS, Blackdom became uninhabited in 1921; and

11          WHEREAS, no structures remain in Blackdom, except for a  
12 barely visible concrete foundation of the schoolhouse; and

13          WHEREAS, today, Blackdom is considered a ghost town; and

14          WHEREAS, in honoring Blackdom's history, October 26,  
15 2002, was proclaimed Blackdom Day by the governor of  
16 New Mexico, and a historical marker was erected at a rest  
17 stop on United States highway 285 between Roswell and  
18 Artesia; and

19          WHEREAS, former Blackdom residents and descendants of  
20 settlers were present for the dedication ceremony; and

21          WHEREAS, although the site has historical significance,  
22 Blackdom is difficult to reach, as it is located in a remote  
23 and isolated section of southern Chaves county; and

24          WHEREAS, surveys by the historic preservation division  
25 of the cultural affairs department and aerial maps show the

1 only paved roads in the area are United States highway 285  
2 and New Mexico state road 599; and

3 WHEREAS, Chaves county road 130 is an unpaved,  
4 north-south route, and an unnamed arroyo is located north and  
5 west of the Blackdom site; and

6 WHEREAS, the assessment of the historic preservation  
7 division is that the Blackdom site can currently be reached  
8 by United States highway 285, Chaves county road 130 and a  
9 combination of unpaved, dirt two-track roads to the north or  
10 to the east, presenting challenging terrain; and

11 WHEREAS, additionally, some of the dirt roads may be  
12 located on private property, requiring permission to access;  
13 and

14 WHEREAS, Blackdom is culturally significant, and access  
15 to the site before further deterioration occurs is important;  
16 and

17 WHEREAS, a task force would be helpful in determining  
18 how to access the Blackdom townsite;

19 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE  
20 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the cultural significance of the  
21 Blackdom homesteader colony in Chaves county be recognized  
22 and that the cultural affairs department be requested to  
23 convene a task force to study how to gain access to the  
24 historical townsite; and

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force be composed

1 of representatives of the office of the state historian, the  
2 state land office, Chaves county, the New Mexico association  
3 of counties, New Mexico's congressional delegation, the  
4 United States postmaster general, the office on African  
5 American affairs and Blackdom property owners; and

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force present its  
7 findings and conclusions to the interim committee dealing  
8 with economic and rural development issues and other  
9 appropriate interim legislative committees by  
10 November 1, 2023; and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
12 transmitted to the secretary of cultural affairs, the state  
13 historian, the commissioner of public lands, Chaves county  
14 commissioners, the executive director of New Mexico  
15 association of counties, members of New Mexico's congressional  
16 delegation, the United States postmaster general, the office  
17 on African American affairs and Blackdom property owners. \_\_\_\_\_

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