



From the Office of Secretary of State

John Gale

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### **Sec. Gale promotes free service ahead of National Flag Day**

LINCOLN – With the approach of June 14, Secretary of State John Gale is reminding all Nebraskan's to fly their flags with pride on National Flag Day. "Most people remember to get their flags out on Memorial Day and the Fourth of July," said Gale. "But we don't always honor that on National Flag Day."

National Flag Day observes the establishment of the official U.S. Flag by an act of the Continental Congress on June 14, 1777. The idea of an annual celebration is believed to have originated in 1885 by a Wisconsin schoolteacher.

Gale noted that the U.S. Flag carries deep spiritual significance for America.

"We fly our flags as an expression of support for our military and our belief in America. In keeping our national unity strong, our heads high and our courage unwavering, we should express those emotions by flying our flags of the United States and Nebraska from homes and offices on Flag Day," he said.

A unique service offered through the Secretary of State's office also allows Nebraskan's the opportunity to fly a U.S. or Nebraska flag over the State Capitol.

"Most people do it to honor individuals who are retiring from public service or the military," explained Gale. "But we've also flown flags to honor fallen soldiers, World War II veterans, and various groups and organizations. Really, the variety of requests is quite interesting."

In 2011 and 2012, just over 30 flags were flown over the State Capitol in each year. This year, approximately 17 flags have been flown so far.

"Each request has its own story behind it," said Gale. "Some people just wish to honor their loved ones. We had one family who wanted to commemorate in a special way the day their son's adoption was finalized. In 2011, we flew a flag for a woman who became a U.S citizen. So, the reasons for doing this really run the gamut."

Gale said his office is pleased and proud to offer the service. "It's especially gratifying to honor those military members who have served and lost their lives or who are retiring."

Flags have also been flown to honor Eagle Scouts, presidents, governors, birthdays and anniversaries. Gale said one of the most unique recent requests came about two years ago to fly a flag for The Big Blue Talking Toms of the National Wild Turkey Federation. "I'm not even sure who they are or what they do, but we honored their flag request."

A flag must be provided to the Secretary of State's office, along with the reason why it is being flown. Flags flown at the Capitol are accompanied by a keepsake certificate signed by Gale detailing the date and purpose of the flight. There is no cost for the service.

"The requests are usually not outlandish and I can't recall a time when we've ever been compelled to turn down a request for being inappropriate," said Gale.

"Ironically, just a few years ago, we had a request from the family of state senator J. Lloyd McMaster. In 1925, he introduced a bill designating the state banner, which is now the official state flag of Nebraska. And, this year, we received a request from an Army officer who is trying to have his flag flown in all 50 states."

Flags are flown Monday through Friday, except on holidays. Anyone wishing to make arrangements to fly a flag should call the Secretary of State's office at 402-471-4070.

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