



RICK SCOTT
GOVERNOR

VIVA FLORIDA 500 WEEK

WHEREAS, on April 2, 1513, Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de León landed on the east coast of Florida and became the first recorded European to set foot on the continental United States of America, predating European settlements in Jamestown, Virginia, and Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts, by 94 years and 107 years, respectively; and

WHEREAS, 500 years ago Florida was given the name *La Florida* by Juan Ponce de León because of its lush plant life and in honor of Pascua Florida, the Eastertime Spanish Feast of Flowers taking place at the time of his arrival; and

WHEREAS, the expedition of Ponce de León included people of diverse culture and ancestry, and Native Americans were present for thousands of years prior to any European arrival, and it is important to recognize the contributions of everyone past and present who has contributed to Florida's heritage; and

WHEREAS, 500 years of history and cultural diversity is being commemorated throughout Florida in 2013 through an initiative called "Viva Florida 500"; and

WHEREAS, the 500th Anniversary of Ponce de León's landing is a fitting time to reflect on Florida's dynamic culture, rich diversity, and economic prosperity with the recognition that five flags have flown over Florida in as many centuries, while also being home to Native Americans; and

WHEREAS, Viva Florida 500 and the recognition of our past strengthens Florida's future through continued education and promotion of Florida as the Gateway to the Americas, reminding the world of the state's historic role in international trade and investment and attracting record levels of tourists; and

WHEREAS, the role of our international encounters through history are still relevant today – with hundreds of Spanish, French and British businesses, as well as sovereign Native American Indian nations, operating in our state and contributing to our economic, cultural, and family values; and

WHEREAS, Florida can lead the world in a message of unity and free enterprise and share the lessons of Florida's 500-year success story;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Rick Scott, Governor of the State of Florida, do hereby extend greetings and best wishes to all observing April 1 – 7, 2013, as *Viva Florida 500 Week* and April 2, 2013, as the 500th Anniversary of the landing of Juan Ponce de León to the land he named *La Florida* in 1513.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Florida to be affixed at Tallahassee, the Capital, this first day of April, in the year two thousand thirteen.



Governor