

## History of Event and Actual Holiday Resolution

National Day of the Cowboy: If you're wondering why this particular day, a Senate resolution in 2005 was signed by President Bush to designate the fourth Saturday of every July as National Day of the Cowboy. What is there to celebrate? The day was proclaimed to recognize the character and values of the Cowboy, which embody honesty, integrity, courage, compassion, respect, patriotism & a strong work ethic. That seems like a great idea to me!

The first governor to grant a Cowboy Day proclamation and help build National stature for the Day was Governor Janet Napolitano of Arizona in 2006. In 2008 Arizona Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords sponsored the Cowboy Day in the U.S. House of Representatives and Arizona again made Western history on June 19, 2008, when its state legislature became the first *state* body to pass the National Day of the Cowboy resolution. The resolution has already passed in the United States Senate for four consecutive years, beginning in 2005. Giffords again sponsored the National Day of the Cowboy Resolution in the U.S. House again in 2009 (H. Res 322), naming Saturday, July 25, 2009 as the National Day of the Cowboy.

Creation of a National Day of the Cowboy flag established a symbol intended to bring awareness to all that the Cowboys and Cowgirls contribute to our pioneer preservation. The flag now flies in twenty-four states and four countries. In 2008, Congresswoman Giffords of Arizona was instrumental in getting the National Day of the Cowboy flag aboard the Discovery Space Shuttle where it went on a five million mile wild west ride all the way to the International Space Station and back. This historic event, taking the old frontier into the new frontier, was noted in the *Washington Post*, a newspaper not typically associated with stories about our Cowboy heritage. In addition, the flag flies with our troops, the Desert Cowboys, in Iraq and Afghanistan. The dream is to have the flag fly in all fifty states and in as many international communities as possible.

Do we really have cowboy history here? You betcha! Sedona has a very rich cowboy heritage. Cattle drives back & forth to Munds Mountain began in the 1890's. Early cowboys such as Ira Smith and Earl Van Deren are still talked about today around campfires. According to the Sedona Heritage Museum "Ranching was a major part of the area's economy in the early days and continues in a modern form today. Riding, roping & branding were not just rodeo sports to these hardy men--yes, & some women. They moved their cattle around the Verde Valley and Mogollon Rim with the seasons and drove them to market. They made their own ropes and branding irons, and their meals were often cooked on the ground over an open fire." Since then, many Western and cowboy movies were filmed in Sedona, beginning as early as 1923 and continuing through the 1960's. The Cowboy Artists of America was founded here in 1965 at Oak Creek Tavern, now home of the Cowboy Club.