

## LOCAL

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# Olympia to honor Indigenous Peoples' Day



The Nisqually Canoe Family sings at Olympia's Heritage Park during the Indigenous Peoples' Day rally Aug. 17, which focused on the theme of officially changing the national holiday known as Columbus Day to that of Indigenous Peoples Day. Organized by Brian Frisina, the rally featured speakers including Squaxin Tribal Council member Jim Peters and Nisqually council Vice Chair Willie Frank III, and was opened by a song from the Squaxin Island Drum Group. **Steve Bloom** Staff photographer

BY ANDY HOBBS

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Olympia has officially declared the second Monday of October as Indigenous Peoples' Day to honor the area's Native American heritage.

Mayor Pro Tem Nathaniel Jones presented the proclamation by Mayor Stephen Buxbaum during a rally last week at Heritage Park. Olympia joins cities such as Seattle and Minneapolis in declaring Indigenous Peoples' Day.

At the Heritage Park gathering Aug. 17, nearly 150 people showed up to support the city's proclamation. The event featured traditional songs and speeches by tribal members representing the Squaxin, Nisqually, Quileute and Quinault nations.

Indigenous Peoples' Day is intended to celebrate the culture, values and contributions of tribes that influence the city, including the Squaxin, Nisqually, Quinault, Puyallup, Chehalis, Suquamish and Duwamish tribes.

The proclamation also notes the city's responsibility to "oppose the systemic racism toward Indigenous People in the United States, which perpetuates poverty and income inequality, and exacerbates disproportionate health, education and social stability."

[In October 2014, nearly 40 citizens asked the Olympia City Council](#) to recognize Indigenous Peoples' Day. Several local tribes were represented at that meeting. Nearly two dozen people participated in a blessing and sang Native American songs outside City Hall.

One request was for Indigenous Peoples' Day to replace Columbus Day. The latter is a federal holiday that honors Christopher Columbus, an explorer with a troublesome legacy of slavery and exploitation of Native Americans.

The city of Olympia does not recognize or celebrate Columbus Day, which falls on Oct. 12 this year.

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