

SENATE RESOLUTION
8646

By Senators Baumgartner, Schoesler, Padden, Smith, Billig, and Holmquist Newbry

WHEREAS, The annual Spokane Lilac Festival is a favored tradition of the people of Spokane County and the Inland Northwest; and

WHEREAS, 2013 marks the 75th anniversary of the Spokane Lilac Festival, which embraces the theme of "Lilac Legacy--Alive at 75"; and

WHEREAS, The Lilac Festival began in 1938 under the guidance of the Associated Garden Clubs and the Spokane Floral Association as a way to celebrate the beautiful Lilac City, Spokane, and its growing popularity as a Washington destination; and

WHEREAS, In 1950, after the establishment of Armed Forces Day, the 92nd Bomb Wing of Geiger Field joined the festival parade as the official color guard of the Lilac Festival. This partnership with the Armed Forces continues today and is the nation's largest Armed Forces Parade; and

WHEREAS, The missions and goals of the Spokane Lilac Festival are to honor local military personnel, recognize outstanding area youth, showcase and celebrate Spokane and the Inland Northwest community, foster goodwill with other Northwest communities, give our youth and local organizations in the area an opportunity to display their abilities and talents, and act as a business stimulus both during the festival and throughout the year; and

WHEREAS, The Spokane Lilac Festival, a nonprofit organization operated entirely by volunteers, provides over 18,000 dollars in scholarships to members of the Royalty program and trains the members of the Royalty program in speech, military protocol, etiquette, self-defense, intercultural exchange, modeling, and the importance of volunteerism; and

WHEREAS, The volunteer aspect of the Spokane Lilac Festival continues to expand each year with projects such as visiting and serving at area hospitals, including Shriners Hospital for Children, veterans centers, retirement centers, and homeless shelters; reading at elementary schools, including Read Across America; participating in the Salvation Army's Clothe-a-Child program; working at Santa Express, a fund-raising arm of the Vanessa Behan Crisis Nursery; supporting the airmen and airwomen at Fairchild Air Force Base through Operation Cookie Drop; and participating in Make-a-Wish, Bloomsday, and the Associated Garden Club Annual Plant Sale; and

WHEREAS, Each year, thousands of volunteer hours are donated to the success of the festival including the "Lilac Loons" who discretely paint lilac blossoms on numerous streets and intersections to promote the festival, the "Float Toads" who design, build, and decorate each year's float, the "Parade Krewe" who oversee and produce the nation's largest Armed Forces Torchlight Parade, and the "Purple Coaters" who make up the Board of Directors of the festival and along with the Royalty Court serve as ambassadors to over 20 outlying parades and festivals each year; and

WHEREAS, This year's Festival Royalty Court includes Queen Brett Rountree of Central Valley High School and Princesses Katie Heitkemper of Lewis and Clark High School, Devyn Russell of Northwest Christian High School, Michelle Tatko of Ferris High School, Hailey Hyde of Saint George's High School, Emily Staker of Gonzaga Prep, and Savannah Sundseth of Mead High School;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate recognize and honor the many contributions made to our state by the Spokane Lilac Festival, its organizers both past and present, and the Royalty Courts for the past seventy-five years; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the 2013 Lilac Festival Officers and the Festival Royalty Court.