

2020 Second Extraordinary Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 19

BY REPRESENTATIVE SCHEXNAYDER

A RESOLUTION

To commend Richard "Ricky" Thomas for his business, civic, and philanthropic service to the state of Louisiana and its citizens.

WHEREAS, Ricky Thomas is the president of Blue Runner Foods, a Louisiana company that specializes in manufacturing authentic Creole meals; and

WHEREAS, Blue Runner Foods was founded in 1918 and began producing Creole meals with the help of the Union Canning Company, a cannery that packaged fresh fruits and a variety of other food items; and

WHEREAS, Ricky purchased Blue Runner Foods in 1993 and has continued to expand the menu to include Creole meal bases and soups; all Blue Runner products are still produced in Gonzales, and the company stands as the last cannery in Louisiana; its products are distributed nationally, and every week more than one million Blue Runner meals are consumed in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, Ricky and his brother-in-law Eric Stuart, who is the race director for the Allstate Sugar Bowl Crescent City Classic, have helped make the ten kilometer race a philanthropic endeavor; as a result of their efforts, the Crescent City Fitness Foundation, which hosts the race, gives away entries to charitable organizations, and charity directors recruit runners to participate on behalf of their respective charities; in 2019, the race raised more than \$1 million for twenty-four Louisiana non-profit organizations; and

WHEREAS, Ricky and his Blue Runner team, in partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank and Louisiana Healthcare Connections, launched the "Millions of Meals" campaign at the onset of the COVID-19 stay-at-home order; in April, the first one hundred thousand red beans and rice meals were distributed to Second Harvest to assist families in need during the COVID-19 crisis; Second Harvest serves twenty-three parishes across South Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, Ricky is also a partner in Port Orleans Brewing Company; in 2020, Ricky and Port Orleans president, Don Noel, launched Port Orleans Brewing United to serve freshly prepared meals for hospitality industry employees; the money raised was reinvested in the community; during April and May of 2020, POB United provided more than four thousand hot meals from the Port Orleans facility for hospitality workers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Blue Runner Foods continued operations at its Burnside Avenue location in Gonzales throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and increased operations to seven days a week; company employees were provided housing, catered meals, and compensation at a premium rate in order to maintain operations; in September 2020, Blue Runner Foods delivered one hundred thousand red beans meals to the Second Harvest Food Bank in Lafayette, Louisiana, as part of its ongoing "Millions of Meals" campaign; and

WHEREAS, Richard "Ricky" Thomas has been extremely generous in giving back to Louisiana and its people by providing food and jobs to those impacted by COVID-19 and the recent hurricanes, and for this he is most deserving of commendation.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend Richard "Ricky" Thomas for his business, civic, and philanthropic service to the citizens of Louisiana; does hereby take this opportunity to express the deepest gratitude for his innumerable contributions to the preservation, promotion, and advancement of Louisiana's world-renowned food culture; and does hereby extend sincere hopes and wishes that he continue to prosper in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Richard "Ricky" Thomas.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES