



**Commission Meeting Minutes
August 13, 2025
DRAFT**

<u>In Attendance</u>		
Christine Durham, Co-Chair	David Clark	Kristy Pike
Ronald Fox, Co-Chair	Sanch Datta	Byron Russell
Mindy Benson, Co-Chair	Alan Hall	Brian Tarbet
Kathryn Asay	Luis Lopez	Kim Wilson
Barbara Jones Brown	Doug McGregor	
<u>CCE Staff</u>		
Nicole Handy	Renée Leta	Chris Abbott
Donna Law	Kathryn Peterson	
Katherine Potter		

Time: 10:00 A.M. – 11:55 A.M.

Location: Virtual Meeting

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Ron Fox, the commission co-chair, at 10:03 A.M.

2. Approval of Minutes from May 14, 2025

David Clark moved to approve the minutes and Kim Wilson seconded. The minutes from the May 14, 2025, meeting were reviewed and approved unanimously by the commission.

3. Co-Chair Remarks

Ron Fox, commission co-chair, America250 Utah welcomed and thanked everyone for their attendance. Briefly discussed his experience in Washington D.C. for the America250 convening.

4. National Semiquincentennial Commission Update

The Commission was briefed on the recent America250 national convening in Washington D.C. on July 28-30, 2025. Nicole Handy, Chris Abbott, and Ron Fox attended the meetings.

The America250 Playbook was mentioned, which is a full suite of initiatives, events, and opportunities for national fellowship that will serve as the nationwide programming efforts to commemorate and celebrate the Semiquincentennial. These include programs recently launched within the past year, as well as initiatives launching later this year through 2026.

Additional items from the national convening included highlights from Nicole and Ron on several national programs in development, such as a digital Founders' Museum on Whitehouse.gov, the 1776 Award civics competition, the Great American State Fair theme for 2026 fairs, and a proposed Garden of Heroes sculpture garden. They also reviewed Task Force 250 and the intersections of its work with the various state commissions. The Our American Story initiative was discussed as well, featuring Airstream trailers that will travel the country to record personal histories for the National Archives and the Library of Congress.

5. America's Potluck

This Utah-led initiative, which encourages Americans to share a meal with their neighbors on July 5, 2026, was presented nationally, and the promotional video was shared with the Commission, where it was well received.

Thirty-three states have already committed to participating, with additional states expressing interest. The initiative continues to gain visibility through local outreach and expanded messaging from the National Governors' Association, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the National League of Cities.

6. Signature programs launch and briefing

500 For Our Future: A new education webpage will be launched in the next two weeks featuring 15 new lessons for Utah students. A joint letter from the Governor and the State Office of Education was sent to all Local Education Agencies encouraging them to plan activities for the anniversary, with special attention to Founders' Month in September. The Dominguez–Escalante Storymap has been launched online, complete with journal entries and historical visuals, and is now available on the Walk250 webpage; accompanying lesson plans will be distributed alongside the new K–12 materials. Classroom sets of the *We the People* curriculum have also begun

reaching teachers. Commissioners are encouraged to contact local newspapers and schools to promote these initiatives and direct communities to the commission's website.

The Pen Is Mightier: Writing a Revolution: A new traveling exhibit of more than 20 panels is now on display at the Beaver Public Library and will travel to all 29 counties over the next year and a half. A year-long full-scale exhibit will also be housed at the Utah State Capitol from January through December 2026, with a VIP opening planned for January. This exhibit highlights the power of writing in shaping the American Revolution and invites visitors to reflect on the role of civic dialogue today.

Walk250: The Walk250 Challenge, which invites Utahns to walk or roll 250 miles, continues to gain momentum statewide. Sticker sets are being distributed through Utah State Parks and local libraries, and Zions Bank has joined as the Founding Sponsor. A QR code on the stickers links participants directly to the website for sign-ups and mileage tracking. Prizes will be offered next summer to encourage continued participation.

Serving a Common Cause: The commission is emphasizing a statewide "Year of Celebration and Service," encouraging Utahns to support their communities throughout the anniversary period. Individuals who complete five or more hours of service will be eligible to receive a service certificate signed by the Lieutenant Governor. Residents are also invited to share how service has strengthened their communities by recording short stories or reflections on the commission's website. Submitted videos will be highlighted online and through social media, and everyone is encouraged to participate.

Speaker Series: Five confirmed speakers are scheduled to present at universities around the state, including Utah Valley University, Southern Utah University, and Weber State University. All talks will be streamed on PBS Utah, expanding access for audiences statewide.

7. Utah250 community partner and event update

Outreach to communities continues, and momentum has grown significantly following the July 1 kick-off event at the Capitol. We are currently in contact with 82 communities, many of which have been highly responsive. Stipend distribution to partner communities will begin this month, with counties eligible to receive \$3,000 and municipalities eligible for \$1,500. To support collaboration and ongoing engagement, monthly meetings with community

partners have also begun, with the first held on August 5. These meetings will continue on the first Tuesday of each month at 2 P.M.

8. Budget & Fundraising Update

The commission currently has approximately \$2.3 million in committed revenue and is working to raise an additional \$600,000 to meet the original budget, with Zions Bank and the Daniels Fund joining as new sponsors. Because of the fundraising gap, programming expenses have been adjusted to reallocate funds more strategically. As part of this shift, the proposed regional tour was cancelled so those resources could better support local communities, and members discussed how to most effectively use the reallocated funds to strengthen existing community-led initiatives.

9. Marketing and Social Media

The America250 Utah promotional video is being shown at several high-visibility locations, including Ogden Pioneer Days, Stadium of Fire, Days of '47, the Jazz Summer League, and the Salt Lake City International Airport, with additional distribution efforts underway. The kickoff event generated strong media attention, with all four local news stations providing coverage, and an op-ed written in coordination with Utah Valley University received further exposure. Plans were discussed regarding the timing of upcoming marketing efforts and funding needs, along with opportunities for co-marketing with the Museum of Utah and national initiatives with paid media strategies, such as America's Field Trip. The team is also working to strengthen media partnerships and editorial relationships to further amplify the message. A key focus remains reaching Gen Z through targeted tactics and leveraging statewide and national networks to expand overall engagement.

Social Media

Over the past three months, America250 Utah has seen significant growth across its digital platforms, both in reach and impact. On Instagram, the follower count increased by 263 percent to 895 followers, and page views jumped from 1,322 in May to 43,000. Individual posts now routinely receive between 500 and 5,000 views. Facebook has shown similar momentum, with views rising by 337 percent to 13,000 and the follower count increasing by 124 percent to 189. Many posts on both platforms are reaching audiences well beyond the immediate follower base.

This online growth is also leading to measurable real-world engagement. One clear example is the Every Kid Outdoors Adventure Community event, where organizers reported higher-than-expected attendance and attributed much of the turnout to America250 Utah's social media promotion.

10. Adjournment

Ron Fox moved to adjourn the meeting, and the meeting adjourned at 11:55 A.M.