

**Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**May 13, 2026**  
**DRAFT**

**In Attendance**

Christine Durham, Co-Chair	Byron Russell	Kristy Pike
Mindy Benson, Co-Chair	David Clark	Kim Wilson
Ronald Fox, Co-Chair	Doug McGregor	Steve Handy
Barbara Jones Brown	Kathryn Asay	
Brian Tarbet		

**CCE Staff**

Nicole Handy	Kat Peterson	Chris Abbott
Renée Leta		

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**Time:** 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

**Location:** North Capitol Building – Museum of Utah, 2nd Floor

**1. Call to Order and Co-Chair remarks**

The meeting was called to order by Christine Durham, Commission Co-Chair, at 10:04 A.M.

**2. Approval of Minutes from February 19, 2026**

Kristy Pike motioned to approve the minutes and David Clark seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**3. National Semiquincentennial Commission Update**

An update was provided on national preparations for the Semiquincentennial, including several high-profile events. Highlights included a presidential proclamation designating an upcoming Sunday as a day of rededication and prayer, the Freedom 250 Grand Prix in Washington, D.C., and the display of large garrison flags at major U.S. landmarks.

The Great American State Fair, scheduled for June 25 to July 10, 2026, on the National Mall, will include a 30' x 30' Utah pavilion showcasing the state's innovation, culture, and agriculture. The effort is a collaboration between state

partners, and there was a suggestion to explore displaying the pavilion at the Utah State Fair in September.

The Freedom 250 Mobile Museum was in Utah at the Hill Aerospace Museum from May 11–13. The exhibit will also be at Liberty Village later in May and is expected to return to northern Utah this fall. Additional details are available on the program's website.

America250 has also deployed Airstream trailers that serve as mobile recording studios, collecting personal stories from across the country. Utah is expected to host two visits, one in Perry on July 9 and another in Salt Lake City on July 10. Coordination is underway to identify opportunities for participation.

#### **4. Budget Overview**

Nicole provided a budget overview, highlighting changes and updates including potential funding from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which allows for additional children's activity booklets to be distributed in libraries and replicas of the Declaration of Independence for each of the 29 counties as permanent commemorations of the anniversary.

#### **5. Media Coverage**

An update was provided on recent media coverage, highlighting key initiatives and events. Promotion for America's Potluck is underway, including a 30-second TV spot. Based on conversations with the Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs, there is also a recommendation to expand Spanish-language outreach.

Additional updates included logistics for America's Potluck, a nationwide community event scheduled for Sunday, July 5. To build momentum, the First Lady will host a recorded "practice potluck" to provide instructional content for the public. America250 Utah is collaborating with the Utah Food Bank, Utah Farm Bureau, and interfaith councils to support participation across both rural and urban communities.

Recent media coverage has also highlighted a range of America250-related activities, including Navy Day at Zion National Park, a citywide activity challenge in Sandy, the release of a commemorative America250 license plate, special-edition Coca-Cola bottles produced in Utah, invitations for Utahns to participate in America's Potluck, and national attention tied to related events.

Utah's contribution to the national time capsule was also featured, with strong media coverage of the display event at the Utah State Capitol, including segments on major local television and print outlets.

## **6. Social and Owned Media**

Since February, America250 Utah has generated nearly 2 million page views across Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn, gained more than 1,000 followers, and reached over 422,000 people through posts and partnerships.

By platform, Facebook continues to drive the largest share of visibility, with 1.6 million page views since February. Instagram has seen strong growth and engagement, adding more than 827 followers and reaching over 63,000 accounts. LinkedIn has expanded outreach to educators, organizations, and professional partners, helping connect America250 Utah initiatives to broader audiences.

The focus remains on connecting Utahns through history, service, education, culture, and community participation, while ensuring the celebration reaches communities across the state.

## **7. Report on Statewide America250 Events & Week of July 4th.**

An update was provided on statewide America250 Utah events and municipal partnerships. The commission's core mission remains focused on honoring the past, celebrating the present, and inspiring the future through the pillars of education, engagement, and unity. To date, \$352,000 in community funding has been distributed to 153 municipalities, to be used at each community's discretion within contract guidelines tied to America250 Utah programming.

Events are taking place across the state and align with the six signature programs. Examples include local service initiatives, mural projects, historical speaker series, community art installations, student-led talks, public gathering spaces reserved for America's Potluck, fairs and rodeos, fun runs supporting Walk250, street banner campaigns, quilt shows, and Flag Day displays. This represents just a small sample of activity happening statewide.

For the week of July 4, communities were asked to submit local events, and that information has been compiled into a new webpage launching soon. The goal is to connect Utahns with events in their communities, supported by targeted marketing efforts.

In addition, America250 Utah hosts a monthly community partner meeting, with approximately 65 participants each month. These meetings help build a strong network, provide program updates, and offer a forum for questions about programming and available resources.

## **8. Community Events Beyond Municipal Partnerships**

Upcoming events from participating organizations beyond municipalities were shared. Highlights include the opening festival for the Museum of Utah on June 27, the announcement of Walk250 winners at the Utah Symphony concert on the south lawn of the State Capitol, America's Potluck gatherings in neighborhoods across the state and nation on July 5, and events on July 24 celebrating Utah's contributions to the American story.

Additional engagement includes the National Endowment for the Arts, which has aligned projects and grants with the America250 theme. Funded projects include efforts to preserve folk arts, community arts events, youth cultural programming, and initiatives focused on preserving local foodways and heritage.

Community organizations across the state are also planning America250 Utah events, including Utah Summer Games at Southern Utah University, Crossroads of the West, Scouting America, events hosted by legal associations, Thanksgiving Point, and local chambers of commerce.

## **9. Marketing**

An update was provided on the current marketing campaign, which includes multiple I-15 billboards and TV spots running on KSL. The campaign will expand in June to six additional billboard locations statewide.

Digital efforts include radio spots, display ads, and social media influencer partnerships across platforms like Facebook and Instagram. A targeted effort is also underway to reach Spanish-speaking communities through Telemundo and specialized micro-influencers.

In addition, a financial institution partner is helping amplify the anniversary through town halls, giveaways, and a dedicated landing page.

## **10. Commission Involvement**

The commission discussed ways to make the celebration more inclusive and bridge cultural gaps. Members suggested reaching out to diverse student groups and immigrant communities to incorporate a wider range of recipes into the state's collection. While the current collection features familiar Utah staples, there was interest in expanding it to reflect more diverse traditions, including partnerships with local food incubators.

The group was also reminded of key calls to action in the coming months: find and participate in a local event to commemorate the anniversary, encourage businesses, organizations, and clubs to utilize the service certificate program, continue the Walk250 challenge through December 31, and pin America's Potluck gatherings to the website to help build statewide participation.

#### **11. Adjournment**

Christine Durham moved to adjourn the meeting and the meeting adjourned at 12:10 P.M.