

MINUTES
TEXAS AMERICA250 COMMISSION
Bullock Texas State History Museum
1800 N. Congress, 4th Floor Boardroom
Austin, Texas 78701
October 9, 2025
11:00 AM
VIDEOCONFERENCE MEETING

The Texas America250 Commission convened with the following designated Members of Commission Agencies in attendance: Margaret Koch, Presiding Chair, Bullock Texas State History Museum, Rodney Franklin, Director of Parks, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Tim Fennell, Director, Travel Texas, Economic Development and Tourism, Governor's Office, Pat Hardy, State Board of Education, and Lynn Young, America250 Representative.

Jelain Chubb, State Archivist & Director, Texas State Library and Archives Commission was excused.

I. Call to Order and Establishment of a Quorum, Introductions

Margaret Koch, serving as the Commission's presiding chair, called the meeting to order at 11:00 am.

Chair Koch requested that AI note-taking through Zoom be deactivated during Texas America250 Commission meetings.

In the interest of time, Chair Koch invited members of the advisory panel to introduce themselves via the meeting chat. The chat record was saved and filed for recordkeeping purposes.

Chair Koch then conducted roll call, and a quorum was established.

II. Discussion and Possible Action on Approval of Minutes from Previous Meetings

Chair Koch called for a motion to approve the minutes of the last Commission meeting held on August 14, 2025, as presented. Pat Hardy so moved and Lynn Young offered a second.

The motion carried and the minutes of the previous meetings were adopted.

III. Consideration of the Following Agenda Items:

Item 1. Presentation on the Symposium in DC Spain and the Birth of American Democracy — Nathan Jones, The Alamo Trust

Advisor Nathan Jones of The Alamo Trust, who represented the Texas America250 Commission at the Birthplace of American Democracy Symposium in Washington, D.C., provided a recap of the event.

Nathan Jones reported that the symposium featured several impactful speakers and offered valuable opportunities for engagement. He also noted that he connected with Spanish colleagues who are emphasizing Spain's significant role in the American Revolution and broader America250 initiatives.

Item 2. Presentation on History Day — Brett Derbes and Danny Corbett, Texas State Historical Association

Brett Derbes from the Texas State Historical Association presented plans for Texas History Day, in which approximately 60,000 students across Texas participate in regional competitions. Texas History Day is the state affiliate of the National History Day program, a project-based learning initiative that engages students in historical research, analysis, interpretation, and creative expression.

The 2026 program will highlight the 250th anniversary and focus on Texas history. From the regional competitions, 1,000 students will travel to Austin to present at Texas History Day in April, with top projects advancing to National History Day in June in Maryland.

Pat Hardy commented on how impressive the students' projects are.

A link to sign up for judging will be sent to the group.

Item 3. Report, Discussion, and Possible Action on TXAM250 Proposals for Achieving Goals — Task Group Conveners

- a) **Enhance civic knowledge of the founding principles of the country and the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. —**

The report from Task Group One will be shared at the next meeting.

- b) **Encourage Texans to unite in commemorating the Semiquincentennial. —**

Ann Hobing, convener of Task Group Two, shared that the advisors noted a missing piece in the effort to encourage Texans to unite: a social media presence for the Texas America250 Commission.

Chair Koch was charged with pulling together the Commissioners to discuss the possibilities and oversight of a TXAM250 social media presence on Instagram and Facebook, with the Unite Task Group responsible for drafting content.

Ann encouraged meeting attendees that while discussions about creating an official account continue, everyone is welcome to follow and repost content from active America250 pages.

- c) **Promote scholarship and research that illuminates the history of the American West and Texas's role in the formation of the nation —**

Advisor Bob Ward reported that El Camino Real is developing a twin trail project with Ruta de la Plata in Spain for heritage tourism recognition. A Spanish group is expected to visit Austin in early 2026 to celebrate El Camino Real.

He shared that the group is in an exploratory phase of creating two templates for story maps based on America250 themes:

- El Camino Real as a supply line from Spanish Texas to Louisiana
- The American Revolution as a model for the Texas Revolution

The task group has reached out to Texas State University and the University of Texas at Arlington for collaboration on these stories.

The Commissioners encouraged Bob Ward to stay on track, giving him the “green light” to continue the project. He also mentioned that they plan to reach out to the Spanish Ambassador to the United States to possibly include Spanish universities in the story map workshop.

Lynn Young then mentioned that she and Ms. Rosie Rios, America250 Chair, recently spoke with Queen Sofia of Spain, who indicated there is great interest from Spain in commemorating the 250th, which may include a royal visit to San Antonio, Texas.

d) Recognize the service and sacrifices of veterans and their families who have protected our liberties and independence for future generations —

Advisor Dr. Krystel Matthews (Texas Veterans Commission) reported that Task Group 4 is in the research and planning phase for a traveling exhibition. They are currently assessing potential costs and plan to apply for grants. The group is also collecting additional surveys for the exhibit and brainstorming the possibility of gathering oral histories.

Jeff Salmon from Frontier Texas in Abilene noted that the museum is currently displaying its first exhibit related to the Semiquincentennial, a military exhibit titled *Guardians of the Frontier: [U.S. Army in Texas, 1845–1895](#)*, running from October 9–February 8. A different exhibit tied to America250 is planned for Spring 2026.

Item 4. Report on America250 Initiatives

a) America’s Field Trip

America’s Field Trip will continue from October 15th through the end of March 2026, featuring additional field trip opportunities and an increased number of awarded prizes.

b) Our American Story

Our American Story aims to collect personal and community stories from all states and territories. The project will make a stop at the State Fair of Texas next fall as part of its nationwide tour.

c) Time Capsules

The national America250 Commission is planning to gather historic memorabilia from each state and territory to include in a time capsule that will be preserved at Independence Hall. Suggestions for Texas contributions can be emailed to ContactTXAM250@thestoryoftexas.com.

d) **Official Logo Use**

Chair Margaret Koch, who participates in America250 national web calls, reported that America250.org, Texas's national partner, has trademarked both the "America250" logo and the words "America 250."

Individuals or organizations wishing to use the logo or the phrase must enter into a logo licensing agreement through the Texas America250 Commission, the only entity authorized to sublicense the America250 brand.

Chair Koch noted that the America250.org will soon begin issuing cease-and-desist notices to ensure proper trademark compliance. The national logo and America 250 are not to be used for commercial purposes, since America250 has its own merchandize outlet.

IV. Public Comment

Mari Tamez, Bexar County Heritage, will share education modules to be posted on the Texas America250 website.

Wayne Smith, of U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, expressed interest in joining one of the task groups.

V. Adjournment

Next meeting is currently scheduled for November 13, 2025 at 11am.

With no further business, the Chair requested a motion to adjourn. Rodney Franklin made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Pat Hardy seconded, and the motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:02 p.m.