

**MINUTES**  
**TEXAS AMERICA250 COMMISSION**  
**Bullock Texas State History Museum**  
**1800 N. Congress, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Boardroom**  
**Austin, Texas 78701**  
**November 13, 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; Jelain Chubb, State Archivist & Director, Texas State Library and Archives Commission; and Pat Hardy, State Board of Education. Tim Fennell, Director, Travel Texas, Economic Development and Tourism, Governor’s Office, and Lynn Young, America250 Representative, were 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. A quorum was not present; therefore, the Commission was unable to take action on approval of the previous meeting minutes.

Chair Koch proceeded to Agenda III., Item 1.

**1. Presentation on the Metroplex Social Studies Conference hosted by Regions 10 & 11 Education Service Centers — Kelly Bellar, Consultant, Teaching & Learning Services, Region 10**

Ms. Bellar, joined by her counterpart Ms. Klose, provided an overview of the Metroplex Social Studies Conference hosted jointly by Education Service Centers Region 10 and Region 11. They shared that the 7th Annual Metroplex Social Studies Conference, scheduled for June 24, 2026, will be themed:

“The American Mixtape: 250 Years. 25 Tracks. One Nation.”

The one-day conference will be designed for K-12 Social Studies teachers and will include a keynote speaker and breakout sessions focused on best practices for teaching social studies, as well as connections to America’s history and civic understanding. The theme is intended to observe the “greatest hits” of the last 250 years in a 25-track mixtape format.

Ms. Bellar noted that this event is usually a fun day for Texas educators, provides camaraderie, and shares applicable classroom materials. She also mentioned that there is a cost associated with registration and assured the group that the registration link will be sent once live to add to the TXAM250 event page.

Emily Hermans of the Texas Historical Commission and Jelain Chubb of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission expressed enthusiasm in partnering for this event.

*Before proceeding to Agenda Item 2, Commissioner Rodney Franklin joined the call, establishing a quorum.*

*With a quorum now present, the Commission returned to Item II — Discussion and Approval of the Minutes from the October 9, 2025 meeting.*

## **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 October 9, 2025, as presented. Pat Hardy so moved and Rodney Franklin offered a second.

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

## **III. Consideration of the Following Agenda Items:**

### **Item 2. Presentation on Our American Story — Kristin Thompson, Deputy Executive Director, U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission (America250)**

Ms. Thompson provided updates on America250 initiatives to the Texas America250 Commission. Key highlights included:

- **America’s Field Trip:** The third round of the contest has launched, with an increased number of awardees (250 students) and additional field trip experiences. Teachers whose students place at the top of their category are awarded a \$1,000 prize. Ms. Thompson encouraged Commissioners and Advisory Panel members to amplify the contest notice and confirmed that a media toolkit is available to support outreach.
- **Our American Story:** This initiative is traveling across the country, sponsored by Walmart, to record individual American stories at all 56 U.S. states and territories. Kiosks will be available in select locations to allow participants to record their stories independently. The initiative will visit the State Fair of Texas in Fall 2026. As part of this initiative, Walmart plans to activate certain retailer parking lots as “block parties,” with specific locations being finalized by Walmart.
- **America Gives:** Launching January 1, 2026, this nationwide call to service encourages volunteering and public service with the goal of making 2026 the largest year of volunteer service ever recorded. America250’s website will include a running counter of estimated volunteer hours, with hours being accepted from both individuals and organizations.

- **America Innovates:** A multi-location technology expo highlighting America’s innovations and inspiring the next generation of creators through hands-on interactive experiences.
- **America Waves:** A traveling flag initiative honoring the Stars and Stripes, capturing 19 hours of content from Guam to Alaska at 250 pre-designated locations. Handheld America250 flags will be distributed at major events, including the Rose Parade and the 2026 FIFA World Cup.
- Ms. Thompson noted that an interactive national event map now includes 403 events across the country. All states and partners are encouraged to submit events to be included on the website.

Commission members thanked Kristin Thompson for the presentation and for providing detailed updates on the national initiatives.

### **Item 3. Report, Discussion, and Possible Action on Social Media Strategy**

Following discussions by Task Group Two during the October 2025 meeting, and authorized by the October Commission meeting, representatives from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC), the Governor’s Office of Tourism and Economic Development, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and the Bullock Texas State History Museum met to discuss options for a Texas America250 social media strategy.

It was determined that none of the Commission agencies currently have the bandwidth to administer social media channels without additional funding to add personnel. Additionally, creating new social media channels would require a significant investment of time to build an audience, given current platform algorithms.

To maximize outreach and impact, the Commission agreed to encourage participating agencies and advisory panel members to repost America250 content to their established audiences to extend outreach.

### **Item 4. Report, Discussion, and Possible Action on TXAM250 Budget and December Meeting**

Chair Koch reported that the Commission received \$10,000 through its partnership with the America250 Commission, along with a \$750 travel stipend for the first Washington, D.C. convening, of which only a portion was utilized.

She stated that expenditures to date total \$6,279.82, leaving a remaining balance of \$4,470.18 from the federal funds contributed by the America250 Commission.

### **Item 5. Report on America250.org and Nation-wide Initiatives**

Chair Koch provided an update on America250.org and several nationwide initiatives, including the following:

- **Celebration for Business Playbook** – The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation has developed a planning handbook to assist local chambers of commerce and municipalities with America250-related programming.
- **National Archives Initiative** – The National Archives has issued a letter to U.S. Governors granting permission to request state and territorial founding documents for public display.
- **My America 2026** – The initiative is launching in Massachusetts, and representatives will be invited to present at a future Commission meeting.
- **Congressional Caucus** – Chair Koch reported that the America250 Congressional Caucus now includes 325 members.
- **Community Partnerships** – Chair Koch noted that the America250 wholesale store has launched. Nonprofits and corporations within local communities may now partner with America250 to offer co-branded products.
- **America’s Potluck** – The initiative continues to gain momentum, with a planned event date of July 5 and participation from 40 states to date.
- **Two Lights for Tomorrow** – The initiative will again take place in April, commemorating Paul Revere’s ride.
- **Moments That Made Us** – Chair Koch reported that a new traveling exhibition, *Moments That Made Us*, developed by Western states, is scheduled to launch in 2026. Humanities Texas will serve as the primary point of contact, and additional information will be added to the Commission website once available.
- Chair Koch reminded those on the call that the America250 logo sublicensed by the Texas America250 Commission is not to be used for advertising or commercial purposes.

#### IV. Public Comment

Ann Hobing, Facilitator of Task Group Two, To Encourage Texans to Unite, requested the Texas America250 Commission provide guidelines for interacting with America250 on social media.

#### V. Adjournment

Next meeting is currently scheduled for January 8, 2026 at 11am.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.