

MINUTES
TEXAS AMERICA250 COMMISSION
Bullock Texas State History Museum
1800 N. Congress, 4th Floor Boardroom
Austin, Texas 78701
May 14, 2026
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; Jelain Chubb, State Archivist & Director, Texas State Library and Archives; Pat Hardy, State Board of Education; Tim Fennell, Director, Travel Texas, Economic Development and Tourism, Governor's Office; Lynn Young, America250 Representative; and Rodney Franklin, Director of Parks, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

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

Presiding Chair Margaret Koch called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

Chair Koch requested that AI note-taking through Zoom be deactivated during Texas America250 Commission meetings, noting that official meeting recordings are available upon request.

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

Roll call was conducted, and a quorum was established.

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

Chair Margaret Koch called for a motion to approve the minutes as presented.

Commissioner Pat Hardy moved to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Rodney Franklin seconded the motion, and the previous meeting minutes were approved.

III. Consideration of the Following Agenda Items:

Item 1. Report on National Archives and Records Administration *Freedom Plane National Tour: Documents That Forged a Nation* — Reports to be provided by Texas America250 Commissioners Jelain Chubb, State Archivist & Director, Texas State Library and Archives Commission, and Margaret Koch, Director, Bullock Texas State History Museum

Commissioner Jelain Chubb reported that the welcome press conference organized by the National Archives Foundation proceeded smoothly. She noted it was a beautiful Texas day with some wind on the tarmac at Houston's Hobby airport, and the program drew a strong audience, including veterans, local and state government representatives, and local business members.

Commissioners Lynn Young and Margaret Koch attended the VIP opening reception at the Houston Museum of Natural Science where the HMNS president and CEO of the National Archives Foundation spoke.

Commissioner Koch summarized key details of the Freedom Plane National Tour, noting that these formative documents, housed at the National Archives, are traveling to only eight U.S. cities with the Houston Museum of Natural Science hosting the exhibit for a two-week period.

Commissioner Lynn Young added that although the exhibit is small, it is an extraordinary and impactful experience.

Item 2. Report from International Texas Longhorn Association on 250th Initiatives — Brad Westmoreland, President

President Brad Westmoreland of the International Texas Longhorn Association (ITLA) presented an update on the organization's initiatives in support of the America250 commemoration. He noted that the ITLA is the largest Texas Longhorn association in the world, with members in 44 states and 15 countries and a registry of nearly 350,000 cattle. He emphasized the historic importance of the Texas Longhorn breed in both Texas and American history.

Mr. Westmoreland reported that the ITLA will incorporate America's history into its 2026 International Championship Show and Convention, to be held in Glen Rose, Texas. The event theme is "Hooves, Horns, and Heritage." A committee is developing programming to highlight American history and the role of the Texas Longhorn, with a particular focus on youth engagement through scholarships, youth contests, and monthly historical features in the association's national magazine, *The Longhorn Drover*.

He also provided an overview of the October 6–10, 2026 show and convention, which will include concerts, youth fundraising activities, auctions, vendors, and community events. Admission is free to the public, with attendees encouraged to bring canned goods for donation to the local food bank.

Mr. Westmoreland shared that he and his family will attend the Freedom 250 rededication events in Washington, D.C., to gather further inspiration for ITLA programming.

Commission members thanked Mr. Westmoreland for the report and discussed opportunities for collaboration, including facilitating introductions with colleagues studying the Texas Longhorn. Contact information was exchanged via the Zoom chat.

Item 3. Discussion and Possible Action on History Day and 250 Awardees

The Texas America250 Commission previously approved a \$250 student scholarship and a \$1,000 teacher travel award to support Texas History Day participants advancing to National History Day in Washington, D.C. The Texas State Historical Association will provide teacher applications for Commission

consideration. Commissioners will review the submitted materials and vote electronically to select the award recipient ahead of the 2026 National Contest.

Item 4. Report on National Initiatives — Margaret Koch, Presiding Chair

Presiding Chair Koch provided updates on national America250 initiatives.

Texas students submitted the highest number of entries in the nation to the **America's Field Trip** contest among all states and territories. Students responded to the prompt *"What does America mean to you?"* A total of 125 students nationwide will receive curated field trips to national sites. Texas America250 will receive the list of Texas finalists and awardees in early June and will report on Texas student honorees at a future meeting. Commissioners previously recognized all Texas entrants, regardless of award status, and plan to continue that practice. The Texas field trip site for 2026 is the National Medal of Honor Museum, with additional visits planned to the George W. Bush Presidential Center.

An update was provided on **America's Startup**, a national collegiate innovation competition recognizing emerging entrepreneurs. One of the winning teams is from Texas: Kairos Health, founded by Sanjana Kavula and Adhira Tippur of Rice University. Their innovation automates patient intake using AI to reduce administrative burdens in independent healthcare clinics, helping convert patient demand into completed care. Winning teams will receive \$25,000 in non-dilutive funding, Mentorship from top founders and investors, exposure to national audiences and potential backers, and ongoing support through the America250 network.

Information was shared on **Good Neighbor Day**, a national America250 initiative encouraging volunteerism and community engagement. Additional updates were provided on **Freedom 250**, including [Rededicate 250: A National Jubilee of Prayer, Praise & Thanksgiving](#) on the National Mall and the [Freedom Truck Tour](#), which will travel nationwide. Three Texas communities are currently scheduled as tour stops, including appearances at the State Fair of Texas in Dallas, and a stop in Denton and Cypress. Communities are welcome to sign up on the Freedom 250 website to host a truck.

TXAM250 Task Group 2, which focuses on promoting scholarship, has completed work with Texas State University to compile a list of educational [resources](#) related to the American Revolution.

Commissioner Jelain Chubb provided updates on Texas State and Library Archives Commission initiatives. TSLAC recently hosted approximately 50 Henry Middle School students for a viewing of the 1870 Texas Constitution, with remarks delivered by Justice Evan Young of the Texas Supreme Court.

Chubb also announced a June 13 program in Austin featuring the rare 28-Star Flag, which heralded Texas's annexation into the United States. Additional viewings and related programming will take place at the Sam Houston Center in Liberty on June 27. The 28-Star Flag will also be on display in the Capitol Complex on July 3.

Commissioner Tim Fennell, Director, Travel Texas, Economic Development and Tourism, Governor's Office provided an update on planning for the Texas activation space at the Great American State Fair in Washington, D.C. The concept includes interactive exhibits highlighting Texas history, culture, music, iconic brands, and statewide travel experiences. The activation will feature digital interactives, historical content, and a large-scale Alamo-themed photo installation. Planning is ongoing under a compressed

national timeline. It was noted that the Mall installation is a **single-use activation** and not designed for future use after the Fair.

IV. Public Comment

Advisor Monte Monroe congratulated TSLAC on its ongoing outreach via the Texas America250 traveling exhibit which has distributed 700 copies statewide.

A question was raised regarding bell-ringing activities on July 4, 2026. TXAM250 will investigate any such initiatives. Commissioners were also informed of a July 8 public reading of the Declaration of Independence at the Bullock Museum, featuring DAR and SAR participation. This national reading initiative originated with the Hawaii America250 Commission.

Amy Jo Baker provided public comment, highlighting teacher workshops conducted through the Bexar County Heritage Center and the San Antonio DAR. She described educational resources she developed aligning the American Revolution with TEKS standards and suggested that these materials be shared statewide during Freedom Week (September 14–18, 2026). She was invited to submit any resources or events to the ContactTXAM250 email for review and potential posting on the Commission's website.

V. Adjournment

With no old or unfinished business pending before the Commission, Rodney Frankling moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Pat Hardy seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:49 a.m.