

MINUTES
TEXAS AMERICA250 COMMISSION
Bullock Texas State History Museum
1800 N. Congress, 4th Floor Boardroom
Austin, Texas 78701
June 11, 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; and Pat Hardy, State Board of Education.

Jelain Chubb, State Archivist & Director, Texas State Library and Archives; 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 were excused.

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

Chair Margaret Koch called the meeting of the Texas America250 Commission to order at 11:01 a.m. on June 11, 2026, from the Bullock Texas State History Museum in Austin, Texas. The meeting was conducted via videoconference and recorded for public record.

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.

Following roll call, Chair Koch announced that **a quorum was not present**.

Chair Koch welcomed advisory panel members and guests and noted that this was the Commission's final meeting before the July 4 holiday and the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

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

Because a quorum was not present, the Commission was unable to take formal action on the May 14, 2026 meeting minutes. The approval was deferred until the Commission's next meeting.

III. Consideration of the Following Agenda Items:

Item 1. Report on History Day 250 TXAM250 Awardees

Ms. Kimberly Peña of the Texas State Historical Association (TSHA), organizers of Texas History Day, provided an update on the 2026 program and shared several highlights from this year's competition.

Ms. Peña reported that Texas History Day experienced an **18% increase in project submissions** compared to the previous year, reflecting growing student engagement in historical research and storytelling across the state.

The Commission recognized the recipients of the Texas America250 History Day awards.

The educator stipend recipient was Lucia Boettjer, who mentored a group of seniors from the Young Women's Leadership Academy in Ysleta. Their Senior Group Documentary project, "From Bare Feet to White Coats," was selected for recognition.

The Commission also recognized Luke Valdez, winner of the TXAM250 Junior Division Award, for his exhibit project, "All for One, One for All: LULAC." Luke is a student at East Central Heritage Middle School in San Antonio.

Ms. Peña noted that photographs and materials from the National History Day competition will be shared with the Commission following the event for inclusion in the Commission's archives and records.

Commission members congratulated all students and educators for their outstanding achievements and wished the Texas participants success at the National History Day competition in Washington, D.C.

Item 2: Report on TXAM250 Participation at the Alliance of Texas History Annual Conference

Chair Koch reported on the Commission's participation in the Alliance of Texas History Annual Conference in May 2026. As part of Texas America250 programming, she moderated a panel featuring archivists from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, the University of North Texas, Texas Christian University, and the General Land Office, highlighting collections and documents related to the nation's independence.

Chair Koch noted that the session was well attended and generated positive feedback, helping raise awareness of TXAM250 initiatives.

Gery Pinkerton, representing the Alliance of Texas History, expressed appreciation for the partnership with Texas America250 and noted that the Alliance provided student stipends to support attendance at the conference. He also announced that the 2027 Alliance of Texas History Annual Conference will be held in McAllen, Texas, and that the Alliance looks forward to continuing its collaboration and educational programming efforts.

Item 3: TXAM250 Budget and Expense Report

Chair Koch presented the Commission's financial report.

Key budget updates:

- Total funding from America250: \$10,750
- Total expenditures to date: \$8,538
- Remaining balance: approximately \$2,200

Expenditures included:

- Website hosting
- Promotional materials
- Conference exhibit tables
- Texas America250 advertising placements
- Travel expenses associated with Commission representation and outreach

The Chair noted that additional America250 travel support provided directly to individual Commissioners for national convenings was not reflected in the Commission budget.

Future anticipated expenses primarily include website-related costs through the remainder of the Commission's term.

Item 4: Report on National America250 Initiatives

Chair Koch provided updates on national America250 programs and activities.

America's Field Trip Competition

The Commission recognized Texas students receiving first- and second-place honors in the America's Field Trip contest.

Chair Koch announced that congratulatory letters would be issued on behalf of the Commission and that social media recognition would be provided to celebrate Texas student achievement.

Upcoming America250 Events and Initiatives

Commissioners received updates on several upcoming events and initiatives, including:

- **Flag Day Programming** - June 13 family event hosted by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission featuring display of a rare 28-star American flag.
- **Juneteenth Celebrations** - Recognition of commemorative events occurring throughout Texas and nationally.

- **Civic Season (June 20 – July 4)** - Youth-focused civic engagement initiative including Slice of History Pizza Parties and National Youth Takeover Day.
- **July 4 Celebrations** - Statewide parades, community celebrations, concerts, fireworks, and Tall Ship commemorations.
- **Freedom Bells Initiative** - National bell-ringing observance scheduled for noon local time on July 4. UT Austin Carillon bell ringers will participate.
- **America Waves – Flag Sojourn 250** - Final journey through the original thirteen states before arriving in Washington, D.C., on July 4.
- **America’s Block Party and America’s Potluck** - Communities encouraged to submit photographs from local semiquincentennial celebrations for national livestream programming.
- **Giving Fourth** - National philanthropy initiative encouraging charitable giving on Independence Day.
- **JustServe Texas Event** - July 8 service event in Tyler, Texas
- **Sharing the Spirit of America** - July 8 public reading of the Declaration of Independence at the Bullock Museum in Austin and the Museum of Western Art, Kerrville.
- **Our American Story Airstream Tour** - Traveling exhibit has visited 25 states and will continue nationwide through September.
- **Freedom Trucks** - Four Texas stops planned beginning in September, including the State Fair of Texas.

Special recognition was extended to the Governor’s Office of Economic Development and Tourism for representing Texas at the Great American State Fair.

The Chair noted that links and resources related to these initiatives would be shared following the meeting.

IV. Public Comment

Chair Koch announced that the Texas America250 Commission plans to hold additional meetings in **July, October, and December 2026** as the Commission completes its work during the semiquincentennial year.

Nancy Foster, Museum of Western Art, shared that her organization will be participating in Sharing the Spirit of America activities and inquired whether organizations would be conducting wrap-up meetings following the July 4 observances.

Chair Koch also offered special recognition and appreciation to **Ann Hobing** for her continued leadership and efforts in promoting America250 events and initiatives throughout Texas.

Brad Westmoreland reported that he and his daughters attended the Freedom250 Rededicate America event in Washington, D.C., noting that it was a successful event despite the summer heat. He further shared that the International Texas Longhorn Association (ITLA) is actively engaged in America250 planning efforts. The ITLA Board recently approved the creation of the Texas America250 Award, which will be presented at the organization's Championship Show in October to a deserving youth recognized for outstanding character, morals, and selfless service.

Mr. Westmoreland also announced that Texas State Historian Dr. Rick McCaslin will serve as the keynote speaker at the ITLA banquet in October. In addition, veterans will present the colors each morning as riders enter on Texas Longhorn cattle as part of the event's ceremonial activities.

Chair Koch thanked all participants for their comments and support of Texas America250 initiatives.

V. Adjournment

There being no further business before the Commission and no quorum present, Presiding Chair Margaret Koch adjourned the meeting.

The June 11, 2026, meeting of the Texas America250 Commission was adjourned at **11:41 a.m.**