

# AMERICA'S 250<sup>TH</sup> SOUTH DAKOTA COMMISSION MINUTES

Jay Vogt Education Room, Cultural Heritage Center

Pierre, South Dakota

February 4, 2026

## 1. Call to Order:

A meeting of the South Dakota America's 250<sup>th</sup> Commission was called to order at 3:02 p.m. by Commission Chairman Benjamin Jones. A quorum was not present.

### Commissioners present in the Jay Vogt Education Room:

Benjamin F. Jones, David Grabitske, Clarissa Drefs (representing Catherine Forsch), Caleb Finck

### Commissioners present via TEAMS Conference Call:

Peggy Besch, Shane Penfield, Algin Young, Doug Knust, Kevin Robling

### Commissioners absent:

Julie Breu, Kurt Hackemer, Mike Derby, James Hagen, Marshall Michels, Jeremiah Schneider, Tim Reed

### Others Present in the Jay Vogt Education Room:

Braeden Kluver (SDSHS)

### Others Present via TEAMS Conference Call:

SDPB, Kevin Larsen (SDSHS), Nick Harrington (GF&P), Dedra Birzer, Angela Corbo Gier

## 2. Adoption of the Agenda:

- No official business was transacted.

## 3. Approval of Board Minutes:

- No official business was transacted.

## 4. Public Comment: (SDCL 1-25-1):

None.

## 5. Updates

- **Open Meeting Law Acknowledgement**
  - The commission affirmed that they have read the *Conducting the Public's Business in Public* handout and will vote on it at the next meeting.
- **Time Capsule Design**
  - The commission was briefed on South Dakota's contribution to the national time capsule. Dr. Dedra McDonald Birzer and Angela Corbo Gier were present to discuss the creation of a special edition of *This Far Country* by Joseph

Bottum, which will last until the national time capsule is opened in 2276. A vote will be held at the next meeting to approve funding of the project.

- **Partner Highlights**

- Chairman Jones gave an update on Sioux Falls, Rapid City, Vermillion, & Redfield's preparations to celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup>. He noted the energy that these local committees had to make the public aware and involved in celebrating the Semiquencentennial.

- **Mount Rushmore Fireworks**

- Chairman Jones informed the commission that the National Park Service would be running the ticket drawing for the fireworks at Mount Rushmore on the recreation.gov website. The drawing would open in late April.

- **Thomas Jefferson Recap**

- Chairman Jones recounted Thomas Jefferson reenactor Tom Pitz's visit to the State Legislature & Historical Society Legislative reception.

- **Flag Raising**

- Jones highlighted the ongoing Flag Raising events happening around South Dakota. Lenox, Tyndall, & Madison all had, or were scheduled to have, a Flag Raising event.

- **National Potluck**

- Chairman Jones discussed the progress with America's Potluck. The Utah commission planned to have the website for Potluck information and locations go live in April.

- **America's State Fair**

- Chairman Jones informed the commission about Freedom 250's Great American State Fair. South Dakota will be provided with a 30X30-foot pavilion on the National Mall to fill and staff from June 23<sup>rd</sup> to July 10<sup>th</sup>. He asked the commission to bring ideas for staffing.

- **Meeting Schedule**

- 

**6. Next Meeting:**

- The next meeting will be held on April 1st at 3:00 pm Central Time in the Jay Vogt Education Room.

**7. Adjournment:**

- The meeting was adjourned at 3:43 p.m.

I, Benjamin F. Jones, Director of the South Dakota State Historical Society, declare that these minutes are a true and accurate reflection of the February 4, 2026, meeting of the America's 250<sup>th</sup> South Dakota Commission.

---

Benjamin F. Jones, Ph.D.

State Historian and Director

South Dakota State Historical Society

---

Braeden Kluver

Assistant to the State Historian

South Dakota State Historical Society