

AMERICA'S 250TH SOUTH DAKOTA COMMISSION MINUTES

Jay Vogt Education Room, Cultural Heritage Center

Pierre, South Dakota

April 1, 2026

1. Call to Order:

A meeting of the South Dakota America's 250th Commission was called to order at 3:01 p.m. by Commission Chairman Benjamin Jones. A quorum was present.

Commissioners present in the Jay Vogt Education Room:

Benjamin F. Jones, David Grabitske, Nick Harrington for Kevin Robling, Catherine Forsch

Commissioners present via TEAMS Conference Call:

Peggy Besch, Shane Penfield, Nicole Christie for Algin Young, Doug Knust, George Seamon, Tim Reed, Marshall Michels, Kurt Hackemer

Commissioners absent:

Julie Breu, Mike Derby, Caleb Fink, James Hagen, Jeremiah Schneider, Tyler Tordson

Others Present in the Jay Vogt Education Room:

Braeden Kluver (SDSHS), Meghan O'Brien

Others Present via TEAMS Conference Call:

SDPB, Kevin Larsen (SDSHS), Doug Dykstra, Mackenzie Decker

2. Adoption of the Agenda:

- **Reed made a motion to adopt the agenda. Hackemer seconded the motion.** The motion passed unanimously

3. Approval of December 3rd, 2025, minutes:

- **Besch made a motion to approve December 3rd, 2025, minutes. Seamon seconded the motion.** The motion passed unanimously.

4. Approval of February 4th, 2026, minutes:

- **Harrington made a motion to approve February 4th, 2026, minutes. Reed seconded the motion.** The motion passed unanimously.

5. Public Comment: (SDCL 1-25-1):

None.

6. Open Meeting Law Acknowledgement

- **Hackemer made a motion to affirm that the commission has reviewed the Attorney General's *Conducting the Public's Business in Public* handout. Michels seconded the motion.** The motion passed unanimously.

7. Updates

- **Account Balance**

- The commission has \$20,789 in its account. \$17,500 has already been allocated to the K-12 educator day during the State History Conference.

- **Time Capsule Contributions**

- Jones updated the commission on South Dakota's submission to the National Time Capsule. South Dakota submitted a special edition of *This Far Country* by Joseph Bottum, designed to fit in a 6X5X2-inch box, and a letter from Governor Larry Rhoden.
- A letter from Rosebud Sioux Tribal President Kathleen Wooden Knife is also being worked on.
- **Grabitske made a motion to approve the expenditure of \$2000.00 for the creation of South Dakota's National Time Capsule contributions. Harrington seconded the motion.** The motion passed unanimously.

- **Mount Rushmore Fireworks**

- The lottery for tickets to the July 3rd Fireworks show at Mount Rushmore will go live April 8th at 8:00 am through April 12th at 9:59 PM Mountain time. The lottery is being hosted at Recreation.gov.

- **Flag Raising**

- Jones updated the commission on the recent flag raising event in Springfield, SD. Jones noted the positive public feedback on the flag and logo.
- The next flag raising is slated for April 15th in Phillip, SD. Commissioner Penfield agreed to represent the Commission at the event.

- **America's Potluck**

- Jones urged the commission to spread the word on America's potluck taking place on July 5th. Potluck locations can be submitted on Utah's America 250 website.

- **America's State Fair**

- The Great American State Fair will be held on the National Mall from June 25th through July 10th. Commissioners were asked to think of potential sponsors for the event. Commissioners were also asked to consider individuals who could help staff the South Dakota pavilion during the Great American State Fair.

- **Liberty Tree Planting**

- The commission will be planting a liberty tree on May 22nd near the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre.

- **Grit & Glory**

- Registration for the State History Conference has gone live. The theme is shaped around America's 250th birthday and the founding principles of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, and how South Dakotans have lived those principles out.

- The State Museum will be opening on July 1st with a temporary exhibit that will focus on the same theme of grit and glory.
- **Sharing the Spirit of America**
 - Sharing the spirit of America is a global simultaneous reading of the Declaration of Independence. Chairman Jones and SDPB met and considered hosting the reading in the Senate chamber.
 - Readings are also being planned in Sioux Falls and Rapid City.

8. Next Meeting:

- The next meeting will be held on May 6th, at 3:00 pm Central Time in the Jay Vogt Education Room.

9. Adjournment:

- **Forsch made a motion to adjourn. Harrington seconded the motion.** The meeting was adjourned at 3:31 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 April 1, 2026, meeting of the America's 250th 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