

AMERICA'S 250TH SOUTH DAKOTA COMMISSION MINUTES

Jay Vogt Education Room, Cultural Heritage Center

Pierre, South Dakota

May 6th, 2026

1. Call to Order:

A meeting of the South Dakota America's 250th Commission was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Commission Chairman Benjamin Jones. A quorum was present.

Commissioners present in the Jay Vogt Education Room:

David Grabitske

Commissioners present via TEAMS Conference Call:

Catherine Forsch, Ben Jones, Marshall Michels, Nick Harrington for Kevin Robling, George Seamon, Mike Derby, Kurt Hackemer, Peggy Besch, Algin Young, Shane Penfield, Tyler Tordsen, Caleb Fink

Commissioners absent:

Julie Breu, James Hagen, Jeremiah Schneider, Doug Knust, Tim Reed

Others Present in the Jay Vogt Education Room:

Braeden Kluver (SDSHS)

Others Present via TEAMS Conference Call:

SDPB

2. Adoption of the Agenda:

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

3. Approval of April 1st, 2026, minutes:

- **Forsch made a motion to approve the April 1st, 2026, minutes. Besch seconded the motion.** The motion passed unanimously.

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

None.

5. Updates

- **National Time Capsule update**
 - The time capsule version of *This Far Country* was successfully delivered to the National Institute of Standards and Technology and will be buried on July 4th across from Independence Hall in Philadelphia.
- **America's Field Trip**
 - America's Field Trip winners will be announced on June 2nd.

- **Liberty Tree Planting**
 - The Liberty Tree will be planted on May 22nd at 10 a.m. Central Time outside of the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. The Liberty Tree was donated by the South Dakota Nursery and Landscape Association.
 - **Grit & Glory**
 - The State History Conference will take place from June 1-3. 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.
 - **Great American State Fair**
 - The Great American State Fair will be held on the National Mall from June 25th through July 10th. Designs are underway to display South Dakota's history, culture, and future. Volunteers across the state government will staff the pavilion.
 - **Grabitske made a motion to authorize the spending of \$25,000 for design and production costs for the America's 250th South Dakota Commission Pavilion. Fink seconded the motion.** The motion passed unanimously.
 - **Museum Ribbon cutting**
 - The Commission was invited to the July 1st ribbon-cutting for the State Museum.
 - **America's Potluck**
 - Jones spoke with the South Dakota Retailers Association to spread the word about the America's Potluck on July 5th. Utah's commission and America's Test Kitchen came up with a recipe for every state. South Dakota's recipe is corn cob smoked ribs. Potluck locations can be submitted on Utah's America 250 website.
 - **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.
- 6. Next Meeting:**
- The next meeting will be held on June 9th, at 4:00 pm Central Time in the Jay Vogt Education Room.
- 7. Adjournment:**
- **Besch made a motion to adjourn. Fink seconded the motion.** The meeting was adjourned at 3:34 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 May 6, 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

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