

AMERICA'S 250TH SOUTH DAKOTA COMMISSION MINUTES

Jay Vogt Education Room, Cultural Heritage Center

Pierre, South Dakota

August 5th, 2026

1. Call to Order:

A meeting of the South Dakota America's 250th Commission was called to order at 3:03 p.m. by Commission Chairman Benjamin Jones. A quorum was present.

Commissioners present in the Jay Vogt Education Room:

David Grabitske, Nick Harrington for Kevin Robling, Catherine Forsch

Commissioners present via TEAMS Conference Call:

Benjamin F. Jones, Peggy Besch, Doug Knust, Tim Reed, Kurt Hackemer, George Seamon, Julie Brou, Kevin Robling

Commissioners absent:

Caleb Finck, James Hagen, Mike Derby

Others Present in the Jay Vogt Education Room:

Braeden Kluver (SDSHS), Nick Harrington (GFP)

Others Present via TEAMS Conference Call:

SDPB, Nicole Christie (Tribal Relations), Kevin Larsen (SDSHS)

2. Adoption of the Agenda:

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

3. Approval of May 6th, 2026, minutes:

- **Hackemer made a motion to approve the June 9th, 2026, minutes. Reed seconded the motion.** The motion passed unanimously.

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

None.

5. Updates

- **America's Field Trip**
 - South Dakota was notified that one young woman was selected as finalist, although she did not win a trip she did receive a cash prize.
 - Students that came to South Dakota visited Mt. Rushmore.
- **Flag-raising events**

- Flag-raising events continue to take place around the state. Since the last meeting, raising events took place in Crooks, Hartford, Aberdeen and Mitchell.
- **Great American State Fair**
 - Dr. Jones and Braeden Kluver left on June 18th for set up of a 24 by 30 foot space. Consistent crowds visited and held conversations. Virtual Pheasant hunting was a big hit with fairgoers and even earned media attention. Approximately 40 states and territories set up displays. The National Endowment for the Arts handed out passports that each location to stamp. The state setup was back up and shipped back by July 10th, some display items are to be reused at the South Dakota State Fair.
- **Museum Ribbon cutting**
 - July 1st the museum hosted its ribbon cutting where an estimated 500 guests visited, including the Governor, Lt. Governor and the local chamber of commerce. The ribbon cutting was celebrated with music from local musicians.
- **Sharing the Spirit of America**
 - July 8th approximately 20 individuals read portions of the Declaration of Independence live on South Dakota Public Broadcasting. Participants included the governor, Lt. Governor, Speaker of the House, Senate Pro Tem, Senate Minority Leader, Attorney General, USD, SDSU and DSU presidents, American Legion, Daughters of the American Revolution, Girls State, Boys State, and the new Civics Bee state champ along with others.
- **State Park Time Capsules**
 - Time Capsules have not received any submissions but will be revisited at a later date.
 - Adventure 250 is on week 13 of 17. As of the meeting they have 1487 submissions across 5059 participants. 445 individuals have enough points to join the Adventure 250 club. An additional 150 are on the path to join as well.
 - Walk 250 has officially closed with a total of 183 participants logging 1908 entries for a total of 32,437 miles. 39 participants reached the 250 miles goal.
- **South Dakota State Fair**
 - Plans are continued to be developed with many similar activities to the previous year, including: Great Patriotic Animal Calling Contest, the Shuck Yeah, Great American Corn Eating Contest, the Great American Hot Dog Eating Contest, Most Patriotic Vendor Booth with \$250 cash prizes. There will also be the best patriotic food, Great American Stick Horse Race, All-American Campsite Decorating Contest, and then Monday is Red, White, and You Day. Several buildings have individual entries or categories that folks can enter as it relates to America 250.
 - SDSHS will also attend with the Declaration signing on Thursday the 3rd of September.
- **Sioux Falls Air Show**

- Another successful show took place with final numbers to come. The DAR attended as well as the Freedom 250 museum truck.

6. Next Meeting:

- The next meeting will be held on October 7th , at 3:00 pm Central Time in the Jay Vogt Education Room.

7. Adjournment:

- **Reed made a motion to adjourn. Hackemer seconded the motion.** The meeting was adjourned at 3:28 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 August 8th, 2026, meeting of the America's 250th South Dakota Commission.

Benjamin F. Jones, Ph.D.

State Historian and Director

South Dakota State Historical Society

Jamie Hageman

Assistant to the State Historian

South Dakota State Historical Society