

America 250 Oregon Commission Minutes of Meeting on February 6, 2025

Opening Comments and Attendance

Chair Tymchuk called the meeting to order at 3:30pm and welcomed Commissioners and guests. The following Commissioners were in attendance:

Todd Braje, Secretary of State Tobias Read, First Lady Aimee Kotek Wilson, Alisha Babbstein, Brad Parker, Mickie Derting, George Kramer, Hanako Wakatsuki-Chong, Mary Lang Bishop, Subashini Ganesan-Forbes, Katie Henry, Natasha Haunsperger, Chrissy Curran, Sophorn Cheang, Tenneal Wetherell

Oregon 250 Updates

Chair Tymchuk provided an update on the official Oregon 250 website, which is scheduled to launch on February 27, 2025. The website will feature information about the Commission's mission, guidepost, and meeting details, as well as a calendar of events, digital and statewide exhibitions, and additional resources.

The public can sign up for the America 250-Oregon listerv to stay informed about upcoming events, meetings, and other relevant news regarding the Semiquincentennial.

America 250 – National and Local Programs

Chair Tymchuk presented national and federal programs that the Commission may participate in. These initiatives are seeking state commission involvement. Following this meeting, Tara Cole will email the commission for guidance on participation in the following programs:

Two Lights for Tomorrow: VA 250 is encouraging all states to display two lights at their statehouses on April 18, 2025, to commemorate Paul Revere's ride.

National Call for Neighborhood Unity Potluck/America's Test Kitchen: America 250 Utah, in partnership with America's Test Kitchen, are organizing a nationwide potluck event on July 5, 2026. Participating states will receive a recipe from America's Test Kitchen.

Simultaneous Reading of the Declaration of Independence: Proposed by Hawaii America 250, this event aims to have all 50 states and U.S. territories read the Declaration of Independence simultaneously on July 8, 2026.

Light to Unite: Organized by the National Flag Foundation (NFF), this initiative encourages cities nationwide to illuminate landmarks in red, white, and blue on July 4, 2026.

Revolutionary War Memorial: The Lewis & Clark Chapter of Oregon Sons of the American Revolution(SAR) is leading efforts, in cooperation with other organizations, to establish a memorial at Beaverton Veterans Memorial Park to honor veterans from the American Revolution. The project aims for completion by April 19, 2026.

Federal America250 programs

Chair Tymchuk also highlighted the following nationwide tentpole programs under the America250 Federal Commission:

America's Field Trip: A multi-year contest that invites students (grades 3-12) to submit artwork, videos, and essays, answering the question "What does America mean to you?"

Our American Story: An oral and visual storytelling initiative to preserve narratives from diverse communities.

America Gives: A national campaign to promote service and volunteerism and to reinvigorate a year-long culture of service leading up to 2026.

America's Time Capsule: A collaborative project involving all states and territories to collect items for a time capsule to be buried in Philadelphia on July 4, 2026.

Commission Discussion – Event Guidelines and Partnerships

Chair Tymchuk revisited the finalized mission statement and guideposts for the Oregon 250 Commission. He introduced a discussion on establishing guidelines for what constitutes an official "Oregon 250 event." Commissioners shared input and asked follow-up questions for consideration.

Additionally, the Commission discussed defining official partnerships for Oregon 250. Further discussions will be scheduled to finalize event guidelines and partnerships, including the possibility of forming a subcommittee to review event submissions.

Commission Discussion– Future Initiatives

Commissioners have submitted ideas for Oregon 250 at previous meetings and via email. The ideas include the [Oregon's Kid Governor program](#); social media campaign for the two online exhibitions, a bicycle tour, and creating Oregon 250 toolkits and resources.

Oregon's Kid Governor was highly supported by the commission. Creating an Oregon 250 toolkit and resources was also highly supported, especially if it includes information that heritage organizations can leverage for the anniversary, as well as enhance their involvement and visibility beyond the Semiquincentennial.

America 250 Oregon Commission Budget

Chair Tymchuk presented the Commission's budget update. SB 1531 allocated \$250,000 to the Oregon Historical Society for Oregon 250 initiatives. An additional \$10,000 was also received from the federal commission. As of February 6, 2025, a total of \$214,988.60 has been spent or allocated for future projects.

The Commission also discussed working with Oregon Heritage Commission, the Oregon Trust and Oregon Humanities to host a grant program with state money to support Oregon 250 events

or activities. These organizations already have grant programs, guidelines, and the infrastructure to manage grants. Chair Tymchuk will share this information with state legislators.

Public Comments

Oregon Rail Heritage Center announced plans to host mini American Freedom Train rides featuring patriotic themes and decorations.

Oregon Sons of the American Revolution, Daughters of the American Revolution, and Children of the American Revolution expressed strong interest in participating in Oregon 250 initiatives and shared additional information about the American Revolution Veterans Memorial in Beaverton.

Adjournment

With no further business, Chair Tymchuk adjourned the meeting at 4:27pm.