



**Nebraska Semiquincentennial Commission Meeting
July 23, 2026 - 3:00 pm**

The Meeting was conducted in person and virtually via Teams

The public was invited to attend in person at:

Nebraska State Historical Society

Capitol View Room

1500 R Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

or virtually at: <https://tinyurl.com/ydvdtv5j>

MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Daryl Bohac, Commission Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:08 pm

Roll Call – Quorum confirmed.

ATTENDING IN PERSON – Daryl Bohac, Heidi Cuca, and Beth Smith.

ATTENDING ONLINE– Jeff Barnes, Kate Ellingson, Chris Kratochvil, Ashley Olson (arrived 3:20 pm) and Bre Wilton.

ABSENT: Gabriel Bruguier, Candace Cain, Roy Christensen, Tim Clark, Evelyn Smith, Chris Sommerich, and Chris Vail.

CERTIFICATION OF PUBLICATION – NOTIFICATION OF OPEN MEETINGS ACT

- The public legal notice required by state statute was published in the *Lincoln Journal Star* on July 17, 2026.
- The meeting complies with the Open Meetings Act
- A copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act is posted on the wall.

OPENING REMARKS

Commission Chair Daryl Bohac welcomed all in attendance.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

No comments or questions were offered.

KEY PARTNER UPDATES:

Mike Markey joined by **Meagan Dion, Nebraska Arts Council:** Gave highlights of their recent events:

- Completion of multi-year project celebrating and conserving Nebraska's eight Bicentennial sculptures.
- Creation of 3D models, Gaussian splats, and augmented reality experiences via assistance from the Johnny Carson Center for Emerging Arts.
- New interpretive signage installed at all sculpture sites.
- Sculptures have been added to the National Register of Historic Places.

Bre Wilton, NE Dept of Education: My Nebraska, Our America public display of the public art design challenge. Currently at the state capitol and will be moving to Kearney Museum of Nebraska Art (MONA) later.

Kami Vorboril, Daughters & Sons of the America Revolution: Updates included involvement in:

- Kickoff event at Gage County Museum
- Rededications in Fairbury and Fairmont
- Participation in Homestead Days at National Homestead Park in Beatrice
- July 4th activities in Ralston
- Grave marking for a Revolutionary War patriot in Fairmont
- Declaration of Independence readings in Omaha and Lincoln
- Upcoming involvement in the 45th All Makes Auto and Truck Show at Southeast Community College September 13th.

Commission expressed gratitude for DAR/SAR participation in numerous events.

APPROVAL OF MARCH 26, 2026 SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL MEETING MINUTES

Motion to approve the March Meeting Minutes as is.

Motion by: Smith

Second by: Cuca

Yeas: Barnes, Cuca, Ellingson, Kratochvil, Olson, Smith, Wilton and Bohac.

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Motion approved.

UPDATES

- **Great American Fair,** Update by Kate Ellingson

- Pavilion funded entirely by private sector (no state dollars).
- Interactive exhibits by Union Pacific, Werner Enterprises, Valmont, Nebraska Public Power, Tenaska, Boys Town, NE State Fair, UNL flags, Chief Standing Bear, Arbor Day Foundation.
- Significant national and international foot traffic.
- Multiple federal delegation visits, including Senators Fischer and Ricketts, Rep. Bacon, and Rep. Smith.
- Governor Pillion attended twice.
- Extensive media coverage by Fox News, NewsNation, Real America's Voice, and Gray TV.
- Passport program increased engagement.
- Severe heat and weather delays, but strong attendance was maintained.
- Potential for display to be replicated at the Nebraska State Fair is being explored (pending space and cost assessments) through the Governor's office.
- **Commission Activity Update**
 - Commission has posted over 250 events from 91 out of 93 counties hosting Semiquincentennial-related events. (Will continue to reach out to Hayes and Blaine counties.)
 - 10 Public readings of the Declaration of Independence statewide on July 8th.
 - Freedom Truck appearances confirmed at: Aksarben Livestock Show in September, Gering and Burwell Rodeo.
 - Chris Vail and Lisa Mensah have produced over 100 Facebook posts.
 - Website analytics showed strong traffic around July 4th.
 - Continue to maintain and update event listings through the end of the year.
- **Status of Funds Report**

Balance as of July 1 st :	\$1,604.00
Monthly website fee thru the end of the year:	<u>-\$ 495.00</u>
Remaining balance after obligations:	\$1,016.32

WEBSITE ADDITION – PAST EVENTS GALLERY

Section recently added to NE250 website to showcase recent events. Members of the public and commissioners are encouraged to submit photos and details of their events so that others may view them. (Need to ensure the instructions are clear on how to submit items.)

REIMBURSEMENT FOR GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE BUNTING

Governor's Residence requested partial reimbursement for bunting used in patriotic décor. Bohac is waiting for further information. He will determine final amount and execute payment upon receiving documentation.

Motion to approve up to \$500 towards bunting costs.

Motion by: Cuca

Second by: Kratochvil

Yeas: Cuca, Ellingson, Kratochvil, Olson, Smith, Wilton, Bohac and Barnes.

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Motion approved.

NEED FOR ADDITIONAL MEETING DATES DISCUSSION

Given current workflow and absence of pending action items, Commission will meet **only as needed**, with virtual meetings allowed under updated Open Meetings Act rules.

OTHER BUSINESS

Great American Field Trip - A Nebraska student, Kaewyn Robison of York, won a national prize for the poem she submitted. She received a \$500 award and was recognized publicly at a Commission-related ceremony at the capitol building. (Bohac is working on getting a copy of the poem to share on the NE250 website.)

Capitol Building Exhibit Materials – Discussion on the disposition on the printed materials currently on display until the end of August. These portraits are the property of the Commission. Commissioners should submit ideas for long-term placement, donation or display (e.g., civic centers, etc.) to Bohac.

UNL Football Game Update – Heidi Cuca announced the Nebraska vs. Bowling Green football game will include a patriotic salute in honor of the 25th anniversary of 9/11.

Commission Recognition – Bre Wilton announced her resignation from the commission due to a new teaching position. Members thanked her for outstanding contributions to education and public art initiatives.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:14 pm.

Minutes submitted by Commission Chair Daryl Bohac.

Minutes are in draft form until approved at the next meeting.