

Ohio Commission for the U.S. Semiquincentennial
Approved Meeting minutes – Quarterly meeting
Huntington Center Building
Columbus, OH
March 14, 2024

Commission members present:

- Doug Preisse (co-chair), Van Meter-Ashbrook
- Michael B. Coleman (co-chair), Ice Miller
- Chris Abbuhl, Tuscarawas County Commissioner
- Christy Davis, Ohio Local History Alliance-immediate past president,
- Kathryn Dean-Dielman, Lorain County Historical Society-board president
- Kelly Falcone-Hall, Western Reserve Historical Society president & CEO
- Steve Hambley, Medina County Commissioner
- State Rep. Adam Holmes
- Melinda Huntley, Ohio Travel Association-executive director
- Vincent Keeran, clerk of the Ohio Senate
- State Sen. George Lang
- State Rep. Joe Miller
- Charley Moses, Ohio History Connection-board president
- Kim Murnieks, Office of Budget and Management-director
- Sharetta Smith, mayor of Lima
- Samantha Turner, Youngstown City Council
- Ginger Warner, Ohio Arts Council board chair
- Mackensie Wittmer, National Aviation Heritage Area-executive director
- Megan Wood, Ohio History Connection executive director & CEO

Online: Megan Kvamme, Muskingum County entrepreneur
Chief Justice Sharon L. Kennedy, Supreme Court of Ohio

Absent: State Sen. Hearcel Craig; John Fleming, PhD, museum professional; Thomas Hankins, Sons of the American Revolution/Committee to Rebuild Fort Laurens; Nancy Hollister, former Governor/Lt. Governor; Adam Levine, Toledo Museum of Art executive director; Paul Oyaski, former Mayor of Euclid; Elizabeth Pierce, Cincinnati Museum Center executive director; Ted Strickland, former Governor, Sara Wickham, TourismOhio director

Staff: Todd Kleismit, executive director
Quanta Brown, operations director
Chris Hurtubise, communications director
Molly Kreuzman, Ohio Goes to the Movies program director
Taylor Tomu, community engagement specialist
Abby Reynolds, executive assistant

Guests: Rebecca Asmo, Ohio Humanities; Erin Augenstein, Ohio River Museum; Hillary Bates, Merrick Bates Consulting, LLC; Jessica Begonia, City of Lima; Ken Blanchard, Northwest Ohio Literacy Council; Charles Bluestone, Bluestone Law Group; Betsy Billingsley, Downtown Lima; Renee Bradley, Rhodes State College; Ruth Chang, Midstory; Sam Chang, Midstory; Shane Coleman, City of Lima; Donna Collins, Executive Director, Ohio Arts Council; Patrick Denier, Ohio Attorney General's Office; Rich Donohue, Lawrence County; Josh Dubbart, Hayes Presidential Center; Steve George, Chief Advisor to the CEO, Ohio History Connection; Senate President Matt Huffman; Julie Klingler, Lima Chamber of Commerce; Tina Koester, Visit Greater Lima; Julie Mayle, Hayes Presidential Center; Chris Nehring, State Vice Regent, Ohio Society-Daughters of the American Revolution; Commissioner Corey Noonan, City of Lima; Christine Pleva, Visit Greater Lima; Logan Sandler, Midstory; Lauren Seckel, TourismOhio; Christina Shearer, Allen County Museum; Charity Upshaw, City of Lima; Christie Weinger; Sydni Winkler, City of Lima; Wendy Zucal, Dennison Railroad Depot Museum.

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CALL TO ORDER: Commission Co-Chair Michael B. Coleman called the Commission meeting to order at 10:40 am and invited Dr. L. Renee Bradley to give opening remarks.

Dr. Bradley spoke on behalf of Rhodes State College president, Dr. Cynthia Spiers, and welcomed the Commission members and guests to Lima and Rhodes State College campus. Senator George Lang then introduced Senate President Matt Huffman, who provided opening remarks encouraging the Commission to recognize and celebrate communities like Lima (Senator Huffman's hometown) over the course of the 250th commemoration.

Mayor Sharetta Smith also welcomed the guests and shared several of Lima's historical and tourism highlights. Co-Chair Coleman presented Mayor Smith with a certificate in recognition of the city of Lima becoming an official America 250-Ohio Community.

Co-Chair Doug Preisse recognized Chris Abbuhl, Tuscarawas County Commissioner and president of the County Commissioners Association of Ohio, for attending his first AM250-OH Commission meeting since starting his term in 2024.

Commission Secretary Megan Wood took the roll. There were (19) commissioners and (37) guests present, (9) commissioners were absent. Two commissioners were absent, but followed the meeting online. Ms. Wood confirmed the presence of a quorum. There were no corrections or additions noted for the previous meeting's minutes.

MOTION: Charley Moses made a motion to accept the minutes from the December 15, 2023 meeting. Seconded by Kathy Dean-Dielman. The motion passed.

Executive Director & Staff Reports

Todd Kleismit and staff provided the following reports.

- Since we last met
 - Quanta Brown has been hired as the operations director.
 - Molly Kreuzman has been hired as the Ohio Goes to the Movies program director.
 - Mr. Kleismit reported that nearly \$400,000 was distributed in the fall grant cycle to 23 organizations across 15 Ohio counties. \$600,000 will be awarded in the spring 2024 cycle.
 - Staff are working with the Osborne Mint to produce commemorative coins and several examples were shared. Located in Cincinnati, it's the oldest mint in the United States.
 - Staff are working with Sandusky County to have an AM250-OH barn painted and included in the Sandusky Barn Trail.
 - Chris Hurtubise shared about America's Field Trip, a new program rolled out by the National America 250 Commission. 75 students across the country will be selected to participate in a special field trip experience, and AM250-OH will be helping promote this program.
- 4th Grade History Pass
 - Ms. Hurtubise reported on the launch of the 4th grade history pass program, which kicked off on Feb 8. This program provides all Ohio 4th graders the opportunity to visit participating history-related sites and museums free of charge with a paid adult admission.
 - 20 sites have signed on as partners to date. Ms. Hurtubise recognized the Ohio History

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Connection, Western Reserve Historical Society and Cincinnati Museum Center for being the three foundational partners of this initiative.

- 60 media stories have been generated to date.
- Commission Budget Report
 - Mr. Kleismit reviewed the FY24 budget document included in the meeting packet. The budget document reflects total expenditures in the period of July 1, 2023 – February 28, 2024. 21% of the budget has been expended through February.
 - The remainder of the budget will be spent down in the latter part of the fiscal year as grants are disbursed and more program activities occur (NextGen Citizens, Trails & Tales, barn paintings, AM250-OH Communities, Underground Railroad Gathering, Ohio Goes to the Movies, etc.).

America 250-Ohio Funding Model

Mr. Kleismit reviewed the Draft AM250-OH Project Funding Model included in the meeting packet. The model outlines funding sources for Commission-led projects (Ohio Goes to the Movies, Buckeye Train, etc.) such as GRF dollars and sponsor/donor funds raised by the Commission. Projects that the Commission is a partner on (Tree Plantings) or supports through marketing and promotions can apply to the AM250-OH grant program or may be supported by GRF dollars on a case-by-case basis.

Approval of Agreement with National 250 Commission

Mr. Kleismit gave a brief overview of the America 250 State & Territory Partnership & Sublicense Agreement. This is an opportunity for state commissions to sign an agreement with the national commission to become an officially recognized state or territory organization. Once the agreement is approved, AM250-OH has permission to use the National 250 logo and is the licensor of the national brand in Ohio. Official partners also received a one-time \$10,000 unrestricted donation.

MOTION: Kelly Falcone-Hall made a motion to accept Resolution 2024-01, authorizing the AM250-OH executive director to sign the State & Territory Partnership & Sublicense Agreement. Seconded by Chris Abbuhl. The motion passed.

Featured Grant Recipient: Midstory

Ruth Chang, Sam Chang and Logan Sander of Midstory provided a brief overview of Midstory, a non-profit and educational media organization based in Toledo. Midstory received a Buckeye Impact Grant Award in the fall 2023 grant cycle, which will support a series of six 5-10 minute films with accompanying web stories about Ohio architecture. A big check presentation from AM250-OH commission members and elected officials followed their update.

Committee Reports

Committee Co-Chairs reported the following updates on their committees' activities:

- Public Awareness

Chris Hurtubise presented on behalf of Elizabeth Pierce. The committee's primary focus has been launching and promoting the 4th grade history pass program. They are working on a plan for the commemorative medallions and promotions of other upcoming programs.
- Education

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Rep. Joe Miller reported the Education committee is meeting regularly and formulating plans for the rest of the year. The committee will have more to share at the June commission meeting.

- Signature Events & Programming

Melinda Huntley reported the committee has five main projects: Ohio Goes to the Movies, Statewide Picnic, Public Art, Buckeye Train, and Trails & Tales.

- Public Art is chaired by Donna Collins. They are working with the Governor's Office of Appalachia and Appalachian community grant program recipients who have mural projects as part of their downtown revitalization work. The Public Art working group will be coordinating the recognition of new works of public art.
- Buckeye Train is chaired by Wendy Zucal. The train will be reminiscent of the 1976 Freedom train. It will start in downtown Columbus and travel to the Dennison depot. In addition, there will be a car show, vintage fly-over, USO show, and a train ride to Newark, OH. This will occur in April 2026.
- Statewide Homecoming & Picnic is led by Megan Wood and plans are in development.

- Under-Told Stories

Kathy Dean-Dielman shared a proposal for an Underground Railroad Gathering to be sponsored by AM250-OH in September. It will link together present and future Network to Freedom sites throughout Ohio and encourage research and connectivity between the sites. This will be a legacy project that continues after the commission ends.

MOTION: Michael B. Coleman made a motion to accept the proposal to co-sponsor the first statewide Underground Railroad Gathering and provide financial support of \$10,000. Seconded by Kelly Falcone-Hall. The motion passed.

- Philanthropic Partners

Doug Preisse reported this committee has had several meetings with potential funders and conversations are underway. Megan Kvamme is also hosting a reception at the Columbus Club on April 25 to introduce AM250-OH's work to potential funders. Hillary Bates, fundraising consultant, also encouraged commission make introductions on our behalf to their networks.

- 88-County Engagement

Samantha Turner reported they held their first meeting on Feb. 27. Their first goal is to build awareness about AM250-OH across the state and each committee member is tasked with sharing commission info with their organization's networks. They currently have 32 communities signed on as official AM250-OH communities and aim to sign on 10 more by the next commission meeting.

Trails & Tales Project Update

Melinda Huntley provided a brief update on the Trails & Tales project. Inspiration for Trails & Tales came from a 2022 committee of tourism professionals who identified a need to better share Ohio's stories on a statewide level. This project involves a series of thematic driving trails launching between spring 2024 and 2026 (Air & Space, Creativity, Innovators, Beautiful Ohio, etc.). The trails will link sites across the state and highlight stories of Ohioans who made a significant impact on the nation's history. The first trail – Ohio Air & Space – will launch on May 9, 2024, and Ms. Huntley reviewed the working group's process for curating, promoting and launching the Air & Space Trail.

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MOTION: Kim Murnieks moved to adjourn. Steve Hambley seconded. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 12:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Abby Reynolds on behalf of Commission Secretary, Megan Wood.