



*Celebrating 250 Years of American Independence*

December 29, 2022

Dear Governor DeWine, Senate President Huffman and Speaker Cupp:

We are pleased to share with you this annual report of the activities so far of the Ohio Commission for the U.S. Semiquincentennial, as required by ORC Section 149.309 (N). As you may recall, the mission of the Commission is to “plan, encourage, develop, and coordinate the commemoration of the two hundred fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United States and the impact of Ohioans on the nation's past, present, and future.”

Our Commission made its public launch at Ohio Statehood Day, March 1, 2022, at the Ohio Statehouse. The Commission has met quarterly since. We are pleased to have a full complement of Commission members from across the state with a wide variety of backgrounds, perspectives and expertise that should serve Ohio well as we prepare plans for the nation’s 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2026. You can find our list of Commission members online at <https://www.ohiohistory.org/America250-OhioCommission>.

The Commission was engaged in a great deal of outreach in the spring and summer, leading toward our first major assignment – the enclosed “Recommendations to the People of Ohio.” Executive Director Todd Kleismit conducted 12 in-person “listening sessions” in each region of Ohio to solicit ideas and to introduce the work of the new Commission.

Additionally, 10 large committees were formed to discuss ideas for activities that Ohio may engage in as part of the lead up to July 4, 2026. Each committee was led by co-chairs – one Commission member and one other stakeholder who does not serve on the Commission. Our committees (in no particular order):

- Celebration and Signature Events
- 88-County Public Engagement
- K-12 Education
- Scholarship
- Commemoration
- Travel, Tourism & Economic Development
- Museums, Arts Organizations & Cultural Institutions
- Communications, PR & Marketing
- Philanthropic Partners
- Showcasing

**Todd Kleismit**, *Executive Director*

Ohio Commission for the U.S. Semiquincentennial



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Ohio is well positioned to be a leader among the states preparing for the nation's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary, thanks to the work we did to create the recommendations to the State of Ohio by September 30. As of now, 31 states have created a commission or similar body to engage in the nation's upcoming anniversary. We anticipate a great deal of collaboration between our Ohio commission and other states and the national America250 Commission in Washington, D.C.

The Commission approved a new logo at its most recent (December 8) meeting, which you see at the top of this letterhead. We have initiated blog posts on relevant topics and begun to initiate private philanthropic support. We often remind our stakeholders that we are not waiting for 2026 to happen – it is important that we make plans now to build momentum toward 2026 and ensure Ohio is among the states leading the way.

We thank Governor DeWine and the Ohio General Assembly for supporting the work of our Commission with \$500,000 in GRF support in FY 2023. Below is a snapshot of our expenses through November (less than halfway through the fiscal year):

Salary/fringe (2 FTEs):	\$86,170
Printing/publications:	\$7,317
Travel expenses:	\$2,573
Materials/professional services:	\$844
Other expenses:	<u>\$2,099</u>
Total thru November 2022:	\$99,003

Looking ahead, our Recommendations call out dozens of different activities we could pursue. We will need to staff the Commission appropriately, as we move from ideation to implementation in 2023. Many of the ideas will require funding and leadership both from the Commission and our state government partners. We look forward to the journey ahead with your cooperation and support. Be sure to let us know what questions you have in the 135<sup>th</sup> Ohio General Assembly.

Sincerely,

*Doug Preisse*

Douglas J. Preisse  
Commission Co-Chair

*Michael B. Coleman*

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Commission Co-Chair

*Todd Kleismit*

Todd Kleismit  
Executive Director

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