

January 7, 2026 – America 250 IN Noble planning meeting

NOTES:

The Celebrate Noble County Indiana 250” working committee met on January 7, 2026 in the Cole Room, lower level, Noble County Public Library in Albion. Grace Caswell, committee chair, commenced the meeting at 10:35 a.m.

A sign-in sheet was passed around and attendees signed in:

- Pam Younce
- Mike Fitzgibbon
- Larry Chandler
- Alexis Wagner
- Lori Gagen
- Judy Richter
- Doug Younce
- Adam Dunlap
- Julia Tipton
- Rhonda Stienecker
- Katie Schaller
- Teresa Tackett
- Tiffany Parker

Contact info was provided to add Jim Swartzlander to the committee contacts. (260) 343-8228 and james_swartzlander@yahoo.com

Also updating contact info for Bill Shultz – (260) 508-6636.

OLD BUSINESS:

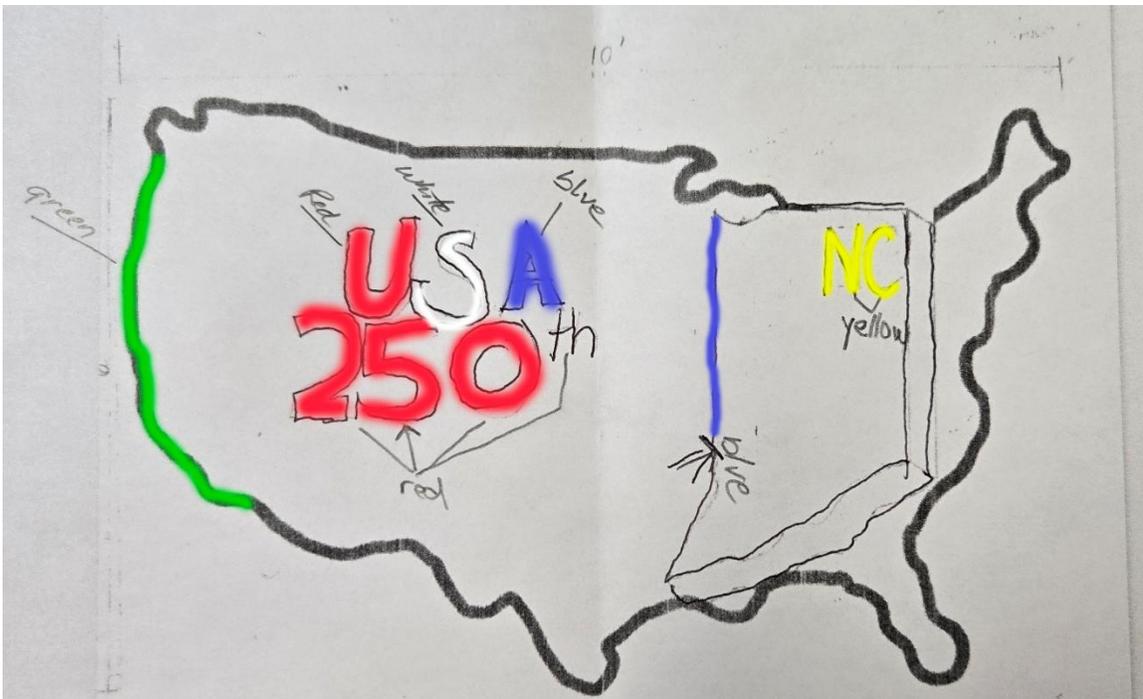
- Point person for the **Block Party in Albion on July 3** – Grace has not yet spoken to town officials.
- **Exhibit at the Noble County Annex** – Bill Shultz was not present to answer questions. Grace asked those present, if interested in exhibiting something, to circle their name on the sign-in sheet. Mike Fitzgibbon at the Mid-America Windmill Museum circled his name. He can be reached at 260-349-2403 and mjtafitz@aol.com. Lori said she would reach out to Bill to ask some questions on behalf of the committee so that more information can be shared soon.
- **Promotional items** – Lori brought 8.5x11” posters for promoting America 250 IN Noble and committee members took them to post in their communities. The design can be downloaded from the landing page at <https://www.visitnoblecounty.org/america-250>.
- **NoblePalooza Expo** – March 14. Rhonda reminded the committee she will man a table for America 250 IN Noble. If you want anything handed out at the Expo let Rhonda know – 419-302-7567 or rhondastienecker@gmail.com

UPDATES:

- **Media** - Grace reported that a press release will go out soon. With the committee’s paid membership, there is a great display ad in the Indiana Festival Guide on page

34, with a QR code to the landing page. Noble will also be featured in a large ad by the state and on the state's traveling RV/bus. That vehicle will be at the CVB's annual meeting on Feb. 12 as well.

- **Media** - Grace plans to promote activities on air in April on the Fort Wayne CBS affiliate.
- **CLC** - Julia Tipton shared that the Community Learning Center is working to confirm a free airing of an episode of Ken Burns American Revolution, likely in April or May.
- **Lighted Display** - Pam shared the final design of the lighted artwork that is being crafted and will travel to various locations across Noble County to commemorate America 250. The committee grantwriters submitted a project plan that included multiple locations for the lighted display to be present, with transportation and setup to be provided by the Mid-America Windmill Museum as part of their contribution to the celebration. If you want your location on the list, reach out to Grace to ensure your name is on the list for planning (schedule permitting.) Power must be available at all host sites.



- **Patriotic Pops** – a concert will be held at the CLC to support America 250 in April.
- **Mural** - Rhonda shared that the idea of a community participation artwork has been passed on, but a local fourth grade teacher at West Noble, Tammy, is interested if we want to do a commemorative mural. Lori said the Albion STAR Team may have an opportunity to host a new mural, TBD.
- **Spring Fling Rome City** - Rhonda is also exploring possible tie-ins to America 250 at the Spring Fling in Rome City, TBD.

- **Avilla Freedom Festival** - Katie reported on the Avilla Freedom Festival, noting there will be a Black Hawk helicopter there, on exhibit, and the planners are looking into having the 122nd Fighter Wing do a flyover. Planners are striving to have 250 participants in the annual car and cycle show.
- **GSP** - Tiffany reported that a new documentary on Gene Stratton-Porter is underway and they hope to have a screening at the CLC around Thanksgiving.
- **Albion July 3** - Tiffany also reported that Casey Myers is working on revamping the concessions at the Albion July 3 fireworks. Lori noted the STAR Team might fund some sidewalk signs to place at the Block Party to promote fireworks that evening.
- **Noble Co Genealogical Society** - Judy reported there will be a genealogy workshop on June 6 in the Cole Room of the Noble County Public Library in Albion featuring two patriots buried in Noble County.
- **DAR** - Judy also shared that the DAR is working to have a float for local parades this summer.
- **Albion STAR Team** - Lori shared that the Albion STAR Team is working to produce a self-guided tour using the Clio app, collaborating with Sarah Knopp, Noble Co. Historian, to provide historic context on several landmark buildings.
- **Kendallville Heritage Society** - Grace shared that the Kendallville Heritage Society, with Jim Swartzlander, is working to put up an historic marker commemorating the 1902 cross-country motorcycle trip that included a stop in Kendallville. This will be erected at the corner of US 6 & SR 3 on Kendallville Power Sports property. The dedication is planned for June 27 and will coincide with a motorcycle rally there that could potentially move on from or to Avilla's event. It was noted that Sylvan Cellars' Dollapalooza is that same night – so the county will be busy!

FINANCES:

- Grace reported that the grant request to the Amelia Frehse trust was denied because the committee is not a 501c3.
- The grant for the light display is still pending.
- Rhonda reported that the committee has received \$2,300 in donations. Grace added that another \$500 has been pledged and \$500 more is going to be requested soon. There are fees paid to the Community Foundation for managing the money, so the current balance with interest and fees is \$2,241.91.
- The committee discussed moving forward with a grant request to Noble REMC Operation Roundup. A motion was made by Rhonda, seconded by Julia and the motion passed. Grace will submit the grant request. She noted they often grant \$2,000 - \$2,500.

- Another funding opportunity, Grace reported, has to be passed on because of timing. That grant doesn't open until November and we missed the 2025 deadline.
- Julia has a name for a contact at Horizon Bank and she noted they have granted funds to the CLC.
- It was also recommended that the committee ask for funds from 3Rivers FCU.

ACTION ITEMS:

(Some items are recapped from above)

- Grace to speak with Albion officials regarding the Block Party on July 3 to determine if they will help.
- Lori will reach out to Bill Shultz to share more details about an exhibit at the Annex.
- All partners are asked to print off and share posters.
- All partners are asked to get any promotional materials to Rhonda for NoblePalooza on March 14.
- Grace/Lori to send out a press release soon.
- Grace to submit an Operation Roundup grant application.
- Julia/Lori to follow up on funding requests from Horizon Bank and 3Rivers FCU.
- Rhonda to share contact info for Scotty Butters, a possible live entertainer for the Block Party.
- All partners & hosts of America 250-related events, activities, exhibits, etc. are asked to send the following info to america250innoble@gmail.com to ensure they are added to the event calendar:
 - Title
 - Date
 - Time & duration
 - Location
 - Admission fee (or "free")
 - Images
 - Flyers
 - Any other details visitors need to know (cash vs. credit, etc.)
- Lori will explore a possible mural location in Albion.
- Lori to ask the Albion STAR Team if they will donate sidewalk signs for the Block Party to help cross-promote related activities.
- Judy will explore the costs and how to order mini-constitutions from Hillsdale College and report back.
- Lori will also look into the costs of a pull-up banner for NoblePalooza and display in a public place.

The link to sponsor: <https://go.cfnoble.org/america250nc>

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

The dates for February and March were changed to February 11 and March 11:

- **February 11, 2026** – Multipurpose Room B at the Community Learning Center
- **March 11, 2026** – Multipurpose Room B at the Community Learning Center
- **April 1, 2026**
- **May 6, 2026**
- **June 3, 2026**

Freedom Festival is raising funds to have a fireworks display. T-shirts are on sale now – available by calling Julie at 260-242-3535.

Kick-Off Party T-Shirts

October 16, 2025 / in Festival News / by Festival Team



Just \$25 each – Adult Sizes S, M, L, XL, 2X

Just \$18 each – Kids Sizes M, L, & XL

Contact Julie to get your shirt(s) today by calling 260-242-3535.

Your purchase supports the 2026 firework fund.

- Submitted by Lori Gagen