

## March 11, 2026 – America 250 IN Noble planning meeting

### **NOTES:**

The Celebrate Noble County Indiana 250” working committee met on March 11, 2026 at the Community Learning Center, Multipurpose Room B, Kendallville. Grace Caswell, committee chair, commenced the meeting at 10:33 a.m.

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

- Grace Caswell
- Pam Younce
- Doug Younce
- Lori Gagen
- Teresa Tackett
- Tara Streb
- Rhonda Stienecker
- Tiffany Parker
- Judy Richter
- Bill Shultz
- Cyndi Schlemmer
- Larry Palmer
- Mike Fitzgibbon
- Wendy Howard
- Roberta Stone
- Adam Dunlap
- Katie Schaller
- Leigh Pranger

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

With no “new faces” in the room, Grace asked if anyone had any changes or corrections to the notes from the previous meeting. Hearing none, she moved on to reminding everyone to check the America 250 IN Noble events calendar on the landing page at <https://www.visitnoblecounty.org/america-250> for accuracy. Lori Gagen passed around printouts of the events listed currently for attendees to review and submit any updates before leaving the meeting.

Anything that has been submitted, was added, or is known to have pending details will be wrapped up soon so that table tent cards can be printed and distributed to eateries across the county. Any later additions or changes will be made on the digital calendar and in any new handouts to come later.

**Noble County Gas & Steam** – Grace noted the addition of an exhibit of gas & steam tractors that will be at the Noble County Community Fair July 11-18. Lori will add the details to the calendar. Larry Palmer shared a mini-flyer with details.

**Tri-State Bluegrass Music Festivals** – It was noted at this year’s festivals, occurring Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends, mark the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the festival. Lori will add the events to the America 250 IN Noble calendars to help promote the celebration for this very American music genre. Anyone who has images of past festivals and is willing to share is asked to call 260-918-4790 to make arrangements to share.

**Bill Shultz – Historic Society Exhibit at the County Annex**

Bill advised that he has been granted permission for the artifacts/America 250 exhibit in the Annex. He welcomed anyone with items to contribute to stay after the meeting for further collaboration. Tiffany (GSP) and Mike (Windmill Museum) are providing items, along with the Historical Society. Others can contact Bill if they want to collaborate. Bill also noted there will be something special on display at the Noble County Jail Museum as well.

**Lori Gagen – Mobile Light Display & Block Party** - Lori advised she will be talking with commissioners on March 23 at 10 a.m. to make sure any plans that require use of county property are approved before executing. This includes the mobile light display that will move around the county and activities for the Block Party on July 3.

**Albion Parks** - Lori and Tiffany shared on behalf of Casey Myers news that Albion Parks has purchased two additional light pole torch displays that will be placed on two sides of the courthouse square. These are lighted torches similar to the Bicentennial lawn torch they will also put out.

### **Marketing Updates**

Lori reiterated that table tent cards will be ordered for distribution and has an example to share. She also shared a draft mockup.

- Grace reported that the CVB will put together a window display that will take approximately 4 feet by 6 feet that can be moved around the county to storefronts where permitted. After some discussion, this is the tentative schedule she will pursue:
  - April – at the Kendallville Area Chamber of Commerce
  - May – open – is there a storefront available? Maybe next to Pixie’s Pies Avilla?
  - June – at Hosler Realty in Ligonier (collaborating with Wendy)
  - July – Lori will see if there is a storefront in Albion to use
  - August – Roberta will see if someone in Rome City will host; maybe Sylvan Cellars or American Elegance?
  - September – open – or could return to Ligonier
- Grace also noted she received a promo from artist Lily Grace. If anyone is looking to hire a musical act, she can provide that information.

### **FINANCIAL UPDATE**

Rhonda shared a financial report reflecting activity through the end of February 2026:

\$3,200 in contributions received  
\$92 in fees paid  
\$3,124.33 balance

Grace also noted there are some transactions outstanding:

\$250 from Crossroads United Way is a confirmed pledge; coming soon.

\$2,500 community grant sought from Southern Pike Solar; likely to know by early April if awarded.

\$1,500 grant – the CLC has requested from the CVB; likely to know in early April is awarded. This would be specifically to cover ½ of the costs of the lighted display.

Grace reminded everyone that donors can cover the fees if giving electronically through the fund at the Community Foundation. They may also write checks (and avoid fees) and send them to the Foundation with a memo to direct it to the America 250 IN Noble committee.

**Commemorative Light Display** - The new light display has been installed at the CLC ahead of NoblePalooza. It is on a dusk to dawn timer and reportedly looks great! Pam and Mike asked for the schedule. Lori noted it is published on the landing page and she will email it to Mike as well.

**Large Format Declaration of Independence display** - Grace shared an interest in having a large format traveling display, or several individual displays, replica of the Declaration of Independence, developed for community engagement. She envisions it could be displayed at libraries, perhaps. Teresa offered to explore how she might print these on a platter at the Planning office. Grace has asked for details from another community that inspired her idea.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Adam Dunlap – Avilla Freedom Festival** - Adam said planning is going well and a list of events will be published on their website. They have added a Jeep show and hope to attract at least 150 Jeeps.

**Katie Schaller - Restore Avilla – Avilla’s 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** - Katie reported that they learned it is Avilla’s 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2026 so they are working to put together an event.

**Judy Richter - Noble County Genealogy** - The group has purchased and has 250 pocket-sized booklets of the Constitution and Declaration of Independence. After some discussion, Grace said the CVB will help distribute them to all six library branches, each to receive 40+.

Judy also shared their workshop scheduled for June 6 at which two speakers will present. One will talk about Noble County Revolutionary War veterans and another will share a story about the discover of an ancestor’s ashes in an urn on a shelf and the full honors ceremony at Arlington that followed.

**Roberta Stone – Rome City** - Their group has met and Roberta reported that the Legion is possibly adding a hog roast for Chautauqua Days. Mother of Mercy is also working on hosting activities for children in June. Based on recommendations in the state planning newsletter, she is also encouraging their local churches to host carry-in community meals on July 5.

**Cyndi Schlemmer – Ligonier** - Cindy advised that a Stars & Stripes Community Picnic has been planned in Ligonier for July 4 at Kenney Park, from 11-3. This is being organized by Main Street Ligonier and the Ligonier Visitors and Convention Bureau. They are seeking collaborations with churches and have a sponsor, BZ Auto. She also noted the city's new Veterans Memorial dedication will take on Memorial Day. Mayor Franklin noted other activities taking place then, which will be noted on the city's website. The Marshmallow Festival will also highlight America 250.

**Cromwell** - Grace confirmed that Cromwell will have family/community activities on July 2.

**New Markers** - Bill and Grace noted that some new historical markers will be going up in 2026 – one in Kendallville and another in Wawaka for sure. Grace believes the third will be in Ligonier.

**Lori Gagen – Christmas in the Village** - Lori noted that CN will coordinate the Christmas lights parade on Dec. 5 and Christmas in the Village's theme is Red, White & Blue Christmas this year. She also shared that she found the address given by Nelson Prentiss for America's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on the Courthouse Square, July 4, 1876. She will share the publication and likely try to recruit someone to do a reading (of at least an excerpt) at the Block Party.

**The next planning meeting – open to anyone interested – will be on April 1 at the Noble County Public Library, Cole Room lower level, at 10:30 a.m.**

**Grace suggested a carry-in in May or June for a little committee celebration.**

- Submitted by Lori Gagen