

**Memo to the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Board of Education and  
Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly, Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce**

**From:** Sharli Arntzen, Assembly Member

**Date:** March 12, 2025

**Re: America 250**

I'm writing to share a challenge, for at least 1,000, of the Nation's 3,069 Counties/Boroughs to participate in America 250. From a talk hosted by the National Association of Counties (NACO) titled Leveraging the Arts to Promote Community and Economic Development at the 2025 NACO Annual Legislative Conference, America250 is a multi-year campaign to commemorate and celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. It is led by the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission, chaired by Ruby Rios. <https://america250.org/americas-250th/>

I respectfully request the Ketchikan Gateway Borough and School District to answer the call to the challenge. In addition, I hope this request resonates with the local Chamber of Commerce, and citizens from all walks of life to participate. This memorandum is for sharing the opportunities to participate and get feedback regarding desire and willingness to commit from the respected elected boards. Additionally, to identify which ways the Borough can contribute to this monumental milestone of 250 years of furthering the American Dream.

Here is a list of some initiatives, with summary and links of how to get involved:

- **America's Invitation:** Answers the call to share your valuable American story. <https://america250.org/americas-stories/>

This initiative aims to capture and amplify the stories and reflections of Americans to help create the most inclusive commemoration of our history. Your story is America's story and Americans from all walks of life are sharing theirs in response to America's Invitation. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wE6LEiCAJUQ> Share your story here: <https://america250.org/share-your-story/>

- **America's Stories:** You can also nominate an unsung American Hero by nominating someone's story you believe needs to be preserved: <https://america250.org/nominate/>

It could be someone in your life whose story resonates with you or has inspired you but maybe isn't widely known. It could be someone who has made a difference in your community – famous or unknown.

Select stories from each region of the country will be recorded, shared for everyone to enjoy, and archived at the Library of Congress, to cultivate a permanent record of the collective American story. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7V5nvO8JWA>

- **America's Field Trip:** Answers the question, what does America mean to you? <https://america250.org/fieldtrip/>

This initiative is designed for the young people of America. It celebrates their perspectives and awards 25 first place participants with extraordinary and iconic trips to some of the Nation's most historic landmarks. 25 second place participants win a cash prize. It is the hope of the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission this initiative and others, will continue beyond the celebration, and build more national unity.

Resources for educators to inspire their students are also available on the website: <https://america250.org/fieldtrip/teacher-resources/>

Here is the flier for the Field Trip initiative: <https://america250.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Americas-Field-Trip-2025-Contest-Flyer.pdf>

- **America Gives:** Seeks to build on America's rich history of service, as the largest-ever National Service Initiative. <https://america250.org/america-gives/>

America Gives focuses on three key pillars: charitable giving, volunteering, and public service, including military service. Anchored around the two officially recognized days of service established under federal law and Presidential Proclamation: Martin Luther King Jr. Day and September 11, America Gives will leverage these days to build year-round engagement and momentum leading up to 2026.

Sign up for more information here: <https://america250.org/america-gives/america-gives-signup/>

During the talk I attended, the chair, Rosie Rios, also discussed additional initiatives in the works for making July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026, about more than just fireworks. She also discussed work toward additional initiatives, including **America's Soundtrack**, **America's Performance**, and the following, **Coming Soon**

- **America's Culture:** An opportunity to showcase American art forms, creative expressions, and cultural touchstones, and increase access to and awareness of the arts in America.

- **America Innovates:** A traveling tech expo that will display America's greatest innovations as well as our aspirations for the future, asking the next generation of creators what innovations they want to create that will be critical for the next 250 years.
- **America Waves:** An initiative designed to create moments for all Americans to come together with their communities, to wave their American flags, celebrate America's 250th, and honor the contributions of those who brought us to where we are today.
- **Time Capsule:** A collaboration involving all 50 states, five territories, and the District of Columbia to collect items for a time capsule to be buried in Philadelphia on July 4, 2026.
- **July 4th 2026 Activations:** A national celebration in Washington, DC and across the country on July 4, 2026 in which we will partner with established groups who host legacy July 4th events as well as parade organizers at the state and local levels.

To learn more about America 250 and the vision for the Commission and initiative, watch this interview with Ruby Rios, the Commission chair.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7V5nvO8JWA>

I look forward to hearing your feedback and ways you see your organization getting involved in this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build community through the unifying values of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in America. The purpose is to inspire the next generation to envision a future where the American Dream lives on. I hope you can join me in this effort.

Sincerely,

Sharli Arntzen

[SharliA@kgbak.us](mailto:SharliA@kgbak.us)

CC: Ruben Duran, Kacie Paxton, Glenn Brown, Michelle O'Brien, Chloe Hall, Michael Robbins, Trevor Shaw, Kendra Anderson, et. al.