



January 1, 2026

America 250 NC County Committee – 2026 Prospectus

Asheville, NC— The America 250 NC Buncombe County Committee (the Committee, or Buncombe 250) was formed in the Spring of 2025 to promote local observances of our nation’s founding and its 250-year history as part of the **N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources’ (DNCR) America 250 NC initiative. Its principal aim, to bring DNCR’s resources to Buncombe County.** Since forming, the committee received a \$10,000.00 grant from DNCR to support planning and outreach to promote the initiative. The funding is part of nearly \$1.2 million distributed across 74 participating counties statewide to support programs and projects leading up to **America’s 250th anniversary in 2026.** Since receiving the grant, the all-volunteer Buncombe 250 Committee launched its virtual presence, conducted listening sessions, and promoted its flagship commemorative tree planting program. The following highlight’s mark the Committee’s early establishment and its aims for the 2026 commemorative period.



Beginning in the early summer of 2025 the Committee received the official mark of America 250 NC to recognize entities planning commemorative events throughout the 2026 season. Organizations across Buncombe County are encouraged to help raise awareness of the commemoration by using the logo and sharing details about DNCR programs and their own programs throughout the arc of the 2026 commemorative period. Use of the Buncombe 250 logo affords entities the opportunity to submit their commemorative events on the America 250 NC events calendar. To further promote awareness and

provide access to DNCR initiatives, the Committee launched the website <https://www.buncombe250.org>, and began its presence on social media.

By late summer the Committee launched its flagship initiative, the ***Beyond the Liberty Tree*** program, with aspirations to 1) promote commemorative tree plantings statewide, 2) commission Buncombe County artists to design commemorative plaques for the trees, and 3) encourage philanthropic donations to service organizations in WNC leading reforestation efforts. With a goal to see 250 trees planted in reforestation across the region for every individual commemorative tree planted across the state, the program is making headway and has received positive response and participation from allied America 250 County Committees, individual communities, and individual organizations statewide. The “Common Cause” to heal the WNC landscape, while also



commemorating this important milestone statewide continues to gain momentum, amplified by regional media promotion and outreach.



The Committee's fall 2025 **Buncombe 250 public listening sessions** afforded residents the opportunity to learn more about DNCR programs and share their perspective on ways they wish to commemorate the 250th in Buncombe County. The grant monies received by DNCR earlier in the year supported awareness-raising, and the hiring of a facilitator to conduct the sessions. Each session began with representatives from DNCR sharing the statewide initiatives, followed by a facilitated discussion on how these initiatives might support programming in

Buncombe County throughout 2026.

Plans and aspirations for the year-long commemoration include community-wide acts of service, commemorative tree plantings and reforestation efforts, educational and field trip opportunities, community gatherings, and a host of programs and events planned to highlight North Carolina history. These aspirations were categorized through the findings into two categories of programs:

Programs to be led by the volunteer Buncombe 250 Committee:

Chartered with the intention of making the DNCR North Carolina 250 initiatives accessible to Buncombe County residents, Buncombe 250 will continue its role as a connector to the official programming and program resources provided by the state <https://www.america250.nc.gov>. These efforts will continue through general awareness-building, and through the distribution of print and promotional materials as funding is available. As no additional state-funding is anticipated, proceeds from the *Beyond the Liberty Tree* program will further supplement these efforts.

Umbrella Initiatives: Programs Encouraged by the Committee for Participation by Others Throughout 2026:

Community organizations, local government, schools, businesses, tourism partners, faith communities, and individuals are encouraged to plan programs, events, and initiatives to commemorate 250 years of American and NC history. The most prominent program ideas expressed during the **Buncombe 250 public listening sessions** helped to inform the following programs and program sectors:

- **Explore Buncombe 250:** Buncombe 250 will promote visitation to participating cultural sites, libraries and museums throughout the commemorative period. DNCR resources will be provided to participating sites (Educational Activity Bags, Voices of North Carolina - Story Centers, Traveling Exhibits etc.).
- **Experience Buncombe 250:** The committee will encourage local organizations to host events across the arc of the commemorative period, at milestone anniversary dates:
 - **April 24th - Arbor Day:** Buncombe 250 will promote commemorative tree plantings made possible through the *Beyond the Liberty Tree* initiative.

- **May 7th - National Day of Prayer/Reflection:** Faith communities and interested parties will be encouraged to host services and moments of reflection on our nation's past, present, and future.
- **July 4th:** Buncombe 250 will encourage greater participation for events hosted by others on and surrounding the July 4th commemoration.
- **September 11th – National Day of Service:** Buncombe 250 will encourage leading service organizations to host participation in a day of service on or by September 11, 2026 (Observance of the 25th anniversary 9/11).
- **September 17th - Constitution Day:** Buncombe 250 will promote participation in Constitution Day programs hosted by local partners, including learning more about our founding documents at participating Explore Buncombe 250 sites.
- **November 11th - Veterans Day** – Buncombe 250 will promote participation in programs by local partners to honor veterans.

Find out more at www.buncombe250.org

More Information:

- **Local (America 250 NC Buncombe County Committee):**
Website: www.buncombe250.org
Instagram: [@buncombe250NC](https://www.instagram.com/buncombe250NC)
Email: info@buncombe250.org
- **Statewide (America 250 NC):**
<https://www.america250.nc.gov>
- **Planning Resources:**
[America 250 NC Planning Guide](#)