



Kane County Government

Media Release

7/8/26

Video - Kane County Community Celebrates America's 250th with Declaration of Independence Reading

Dozens of community members gathered July 8, 2026 at American Legion Post 75 in Geneva to celebrate America's 250th anniversary and the premiere of Kane County's community reading of the Declaration of Independence.

The commemorative video featured 25 residents from across Kane County, representing a wide range of ages, backgrounds, and communities, each reading a portion of the nation's founding document.

The July 8 premiere coincided with a nationwide reading of the Declaration taking place in all 50 states and U.S. territories.

Kane County Board Chairman Corinne Pierog served as master of ceremonies for the event.

"The Declaration of Independence is more than a historic document—it is the foundation of our nation and the enduring expression of the principles upon which our democracy was built," said Chair Pierog. "One of independence's strongest advocates, Thomas Paine, wrote in *Common Sense*, 'We have it in our power to begin the world over again,' capturing the spirit of a people determined to build a nation founded on liberty and self-government. This community reading brought together residents from across Kane County to reflect on those enduring ideals and commemorate this milestone in our nation's history."

Kane County Chief Judge Robert Villa, alongside Maureen Shepro representing her husband, Kane County Historian Ken Shepro, shared the history behind the July 8 public reading of the Declaration of Independence. "While Congress formally adopted the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, it also ordered the document to be printed, distributed throughout the colonies, and read publicly on July 8. On that day, Colonel John Nixon stood before the Pennsylvania State House, now known as Independence Hall, and delivered the first public reading of the Declaration, introducing its powerful words to the American people."

Community members participating in the video included Chief Judge Robert Villa, Simon Rodriguez, Amelia "Ghost" Huston, Brennan Vostal, Mayleyah Douglas, Miki Miller, Andrew Van Meter, Steve Leffler, Marissa Amoni, Collette Taylor, Axel Dellis, Roy Voss, Linda Voss, Sue Klinkhamer, Corinne and Kali Dixon, Mitchel Hadfield, Pastor EJ Burch, Ange Michele Yvon, Hanna Rasul, June Keibler, Dolores Hicks, Father Godwin Asuquo, J. Patrick Jaeger, Duke Seward, Mike Kenyon and two young readers Connor and Jaxson.

[WATCH THE VIDEO HERE](#)

Jack Erwin, a retired U.S. Army Major and Social Studies teacher at Franklin Middle School in Wheaton, will deliver the event's closing remarks, "The Tree of Liberty: 250 Years Celebrating the Declaration of Independence." A decorated veteran with three post-9/11 deployments, including service in Afghanistan, Erwin continues to serve his community through his leadership with the St. Charles VFW and several veteran organizations.

The video was produced by Andrew Van Meter of Batavia Access Television as Kane County's contribution to the nationwide commemoration of America's Semiquincentennial.

Kane County also extends its sincere appreciation to American Legion Post 75 for hosting the community event and helping commemorate this historic milestone.